

**SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF WOMEN IN PRIMARY TEACHING:**

**Career Contexts and Strategies**



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A collection of articles and book  
submitted to the University of Nottingham  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## Abstract

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Women in Primary Teaching: career contexts and strategies  
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## ABSTRACT

This collection of articles and the book are a product of one piece of research on the careers of women in teaching. The research began with a statistical analysis of the career characteristics of women and men in teaching in one educational authority using data collated from Teachers' Service Cards. Then the research focused on women in primary teaching. Career history interviews were conducted with twenty-five married women who were headteachers of primary or infant schools from two educational areas of an English midlands county. The data for the research consisted of the Teachers' Service Cards, the interview material, together with DES official statistics on Teachers in Service.

The articles appear in the order they were published. The first article contains an examination of material from the Teachers' Service Cards. Articles two, three and four are analyses of aspects of the women headteachers subjective careers based on the interview data. The fifth article examines aspects of the local labour market for primary teachers using the interview data. The sixth article argues that the use of career history material can make a significant contribution to sociological understanding about careers. The seventh article uses official statistics to explore the effects of the wider contexts of expansion and contraction on primary teachers careers.

The book represents an attempt to bring together the themes and issues in the articles and to develop them further.

1. Teachers' Careers: the objective dimension

Educational Studies, vol. 12, no. 3, 1986 pp. 225-244

## TEACHERS CAREERS : THE OBJECTIVE DIMENSION

To what extent can an examination of different career patterns among teachers help in explaining the vertical differences(1) of achievement between men and women within the teaching profession? National statistics indicate highly significant sex differences in the achievement of higher scaled posts (and hence of higher salaries and greater responsibilities). Thus, although a majority of teachers in maintained schools (nursery, primary and secondary) in England and Wales are women (59% according to 1983 figures) and although three quarters of teachers in primary schools are women (77%), nevertheless, only 39% of headteachers are women and only 44% of primary headteachers are women. In addition, it is important to remember that since headteacher scales are differentiated according to size of school (numbers and ages of pupils on roll(2)), the women headteachers are heads of smaller (infant and nursery) schools rather than heads of larger secondary comprehensive schools. Only 16% of secondary headteachers are women.

My intention in examining these cards was two-fold. Firstly, I wanted My data on teachers careers and career achievements is drawn from a sample of some 530 Teachers Service Cards from one local education authority. These cards are kept by the Teachers Sections of local education authorities on behalf of the Department of Education and Science and it is from these cards that the DES annually compiles its statistics on teachers in service in England and Wales. The cards are records of teachers salary, scale and school changes over their teaching careers since they first entered the profession. When a teacher changes jobs and moves to a different local education authority, the service card goes to the new employing authority. These cards are reasonably complete records, therefore, of teachers employment histories. From



these cards it is possible to get accurate, up-to-date information on teachers' current scale positions, on changes in positions since 1962 (the year the card system was introduced) including changes of schools and changes of salary. Also, it is possible to get some information on different career patterns (late entry, broken work experience) and on initial qualifications and on post-entry qualifications. There are some gaps in the information since not all the cards are detailed (particularly in respect of periods in other types of employment or at home) because only aggregate information relevant for salary purposes is entered. Also, there are some important omissions: marital status is not necessarily accurate for women teachers; it is possible to infer only that a woman has been 'once married' by a change in surname on the card; marital status is not indicated at all for men teachers. Information about family responsibilities is not entered for any teacher though, again, it is possible to infer family responsibilities for women teachers from periods of absence for maternity leave.

My intention in examining these cards was two-fold. Firstly, I wanted to explore the statistical data that was available on teachers careers from the cards, and to analyse this data on male and female teachers as a preliminary to a more detailed study of women teachers careers. Secondly, I used the cards to select two samples of women teachers who would be likely to have different views of their family and work commitments, different views about their teaching careers. These women teachers are being studied in more detail through interviews and career history research. This data is being analysed at the present time. Of the 531 cards I have examined in the first stage of the research, all were of men and women teachers in one area (out of eight) in one county. The cards are filed alphabetically by school in the eight areas. From



the one area. I have taken the first 23 primary, junior and infant schools (254 teachers) and the first 5 secondary schools (277 teachers).

In my sample of teachers, the male and female proportions were identical to the national figures. 41% of the sample was male (219 teachers) and 59% was female (312 teachers). Of the 254 primary teachers in the sample, 75% were female (190 teachers) which is less than the national percentage of 77%. Of the 277 secondary teachers, 44% were female which is slightly less than the national percentage of 45%. Of the 23 headteachers in the sample (since the sample was made up of the staff of 28 schools), 9 were female (32%) and of the 9 female heads all were heads of primary and infant schools.

The distribution by scale of sample teachers is shown in Table I. As this table shows, 82% of women teachers in the sample were on scales 1 and 2 whereas 44% of the men teachers were on these scales. This table takes no account of age or length of experience, however.

The idea of a teaching career can result in gross over-simplification. This happens if it is assumed that stages in a career have to be marked by promotion, by progress, by increases in prestige and income. We must not assume that all teachers have the same career goals, namely that they wish to move up through the scales to the highest point they can reach; that all teachers will be working towards the highest positions, the posts of head or deputy head. Such an assumption is over simple in at least two respects. Firstly, the position of headteacher does not represent the highest pinnacle of the profession. Some teachers envisage a further move into inspector or college lecturer positions. But, secondly, not all teachers want promotion. Some

Table I

Current Scale of Sample Teachers: Male and Female

	Males		Females		Totals	
	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage
Scale 1	41	18.7	142	45.5	183	34.5
Scale 2	55	25.1	113	36.2	168	31.6
Scale 3	36	16.4	29	9.3	65	12.2
Scale 4	38	17.4	5	1.6	43	8.1
Senior teachers, Second master/ mistress	9	4.1	2	0.6	11	2.1
Deputy Heads: Groups 01-04 schools	4	1.8	3	1.0	7	1.3
Deputy Heads: Groups 05-09 schools	11	5.0	7	2.2	18	3.4
Deputy Heads: Groups 10-13 schools	6	2.7	2	0.6	8	1.5
Heads : Groups 01-04 schools	5	2.3	5	1.6	10	1.9
Heads : Groups 05-09 schools	10	4.6	4	1.3	14	2.6
Heads : Groups 10-13 schools	4	1.8	-	-	4	0.8
	219	99.9	312	99.9	531	100.0

teachers prefer classroom teaching and do not seek promotion into more responsible and more administrative roles. See, for example, the research of Nias (1981, 1984) on women primary teachers, my own research findings (in preparation) and the work of Bennet (1985) in respect of art teachers.

I want to take up this distinction and to explore the two dimensions of the teaching career in order to see how the two are interrelated in an. In a general review of the term 'career', Dex (1985) has shown how a career can be used as a descriptive concept, equivalent to a work history. It does not have to be used prescriptively to show progress and promotion through an ordered sequence of occupations into more responsible, higher status and salaried roles.(3) In connection with this, a crucial distinction has been made by Hughes (1971, p. 137) between objective and subjective dimensions of a career and this distinction has been emphasized by Woods (1983) in respect of teachers careers. Their professional and salary structure are negotiated nationally by the Purchase Committee and the deliberations of this Committee have. The objective dimension consists of the system of clearly defined statuses and offices which is the formal career structure through which individuals either move or remain at a stage which is their career peak. In teaching, the career structure is made up of a series of scaled posts and positions within which teachers careers are constructed. However, the subjective dimension consists of the teachers own changing perspectives towards their careers. The subjective dimensions focus is how people actually experience their careers. Thus, subjective careers are not as orderly, unilinear or hierarchical as objective career structures might lead us to assume. Thus, when men and women begin their teaching careers they will have different goals and ambitions. As they experience changes in their family situations, in schools

themselves and even in the national economy (Ball and Goodson, 1985) so they will experience changes in their career plans and ambitions. It is important to remember therefore that the notions of progress, advance or success in a career are subjective.

I want to take up this distinction and to explore the two dimensions of the teaching career in order to see how the two are interrelated in an attempt to explain some of the career differences among and between men and women teachers. The first dimension, the objective, is the subject of this article. My research data on the subjective dimension is being analysed at the present time on a sample of women teachers and the findings will appear in a later article.

In considering the objective career structure of teachers, it is necessary to point out the bureaucratic nature of the teaching career. The teachers promotional and salary structure are negotiated nationally by the Burnham Committee and the deliberations of this Committee have determined the type and the range of promotion posts that go to make up teachers careers (Hilsum and Start, 1974). For teachers, their career structure has been rationalized and a uniform structure exists by means of which all teachers have a scale position. To an extent the qualifications required for promotion and the responsibilities attaching to different scale positions have been specified. Thus teaching provides a regularized bureaucratic career in which each stage of the career provides the necessary qualifications for entry to the next and subsequent stages and where the national advertising of higher scaled posts means open competition (to an extent) for such posts (Lyons, 1981).



The main problem with a bureaucratic career structure is that there are limited opportunities. There are a small number of top career and salary positions and a large number of people lower in the status and salary hierarchy and many are competing for the few top positions. To cope with this blockage, the Burnham settlements since the last war have shown a steady expansion in the number of different status posts available (Hilsam and Start, 1974). Thus, additional middle rank positions have been created in schools and a range of career goals has become available. At first, posts of special responsibility and graded posts were created to provide a career stage in between the basic scales and the relatively few headship positions. Then, in 1971, five scales were created (later reduced to four) to give all teachers some expectation of career advancement. This gave a realistic expectation of some modest career achievement to larger numbers of teachers.

The main advantage of a bureaucratic career structure is that nationally there is some uniformity in salary and status scales for those of formally equal position in terms of length of experience. This gives a degree of protection for those teachers in a poor market position (e.g. the teachers of an undesired curriculum area). Also, it enables continuity of satisfactory teaching service to be an adequate basis for a career.

The bureaucratic career structure, the formal structure of scaled posts through which teachers careers are constructed, is relatively straightforward although there are several anomalies that must be noted. Scale 1 is the first scale on which all new teachers are placed. Scale 1 has fifteen increments and teachers can begin on a higher increment for a good honours degree and for periods of other occupational or home-making

experience.(4) Teachers then gain promotion to scales 2, 3 and 4 by length of teaching experience and by taking on additional responsibilities. They are promoted either internally if a scaled post is available or externally by moving to another school for an advertised scaled post. Scale 4 posts include heads of department posts in smaller schools. Senior teacher and second master and mistress posts follow in schools with a high unit total score (see Note 2). Thereafter, promotion would be to deputy and finally to headteacher status.

However, there are marked differences between primary and secondary schools in the scaled career ladder. Scale 4 and senior and second master scales are not available in primary schools. Thus, in primary schools, a typical career would involve promotion to scale 2 or 3 posts followed by deputy head or direct to headteacher positions. In secondary schools a typical career would advance to scale 3 and "then either through greater subject specialisation to second and eventually to head of department, or would advance through a move to counselling roles such as year tutor; following this teachers would move to senior and deputy head positions and eventually to headteacher." (Woods, 1983 p.13).

It is important to note, therefore, that promotion to a deputy headship or even to a headteacher post does not involve the same degree of status achievement and salary increase in an infant school as in a secondary comprehensive school. Most scale 4 teachers in secondary schools would earn more than headteachers of primary schools. Also, it has to be remembered that different scale positions are not all equally spaced. Thus promotions early in a career (for example between scales 1 and 2) are usually small ones whereas promotions later may involve a greater

change, for example, from a scale 4 head of department to a deputy head post, (Hilsum and Start, 1974). Inevitably this means that promotions in primary schools only involve small changes in responsibilities and in earnings, whereas promotions in secondary schools, particularly at the higher scales, can involve larger, more significant changes in responsibilities, earnings and in status. However, with these anomalies in mind, a bureaucratic career structure exists in teaching and this makes it possible to assess to what extent moves through the increments and the scales are associated with the different career patterns of teachers.

Thus the sample is made up of predominantly mid-career teachers with the In describing the distribution of the sample of teachers throughout the objective career structure, I want to examine to what extent promotion and progress are automatic, that is according to age and length of experience(5) and to what extent teachers construct different types of careers by gaining post-entry qualifications, by working continuously or by breaking their teaching experience. Are there major differences between the sexes in respect of these characteristics or are the most important differences within the male and female categories in the sample? It is my contention that analysis of the objective dimension can throw up ideas which can then be more rigorously examined in the subjective dimension.

of men teachers aged 40+, 127 women teachers are on these scales (73.4% of women teachers aged 40+). Thus, age is not

AGE AND LENGTH OF EXPERIENCE three-quarters of women teachers or for

It is one of the characteristics of a professional career that age and length of experience will be rewarded in status and salary terms. Thus, in contrast to jobs where productivity determines earnings and where, as a consequence, earnings tend to decline with age, in the professions, experience is an advantage (a human capital asset), and there is a clear

expectation of progress with age and length of service. In teaching, promotion scales are constructed with a number of increments and progress up through the increments is by annual awards which are automatic until the individual reaches the top increment on the scale.

Age has to be distinguished from length of experience however, because not all teachers enter the profession at age 21 or 22 and not all teachers have unbroken work experience. The age distribution of the sample teachers is shown in Table II.

Thus the sample is made up of predominantly mid-career teachers with the highest proportion of women teachers falling in the 30-39 age category (the age when most women are supposedly at home with their young families) and the highest percentage of men teachers falling in the 40-49 age category. The scale distribution of the sample teachers by age is shown in Table III.

In general, in teaching, age is rewarded with higher scaled posts although there are important exceptions. Of those teachers who are age 40 and above, (311 teachers), 158 teachers are still on scales 1 and 2 (50.8%). But whereas only 31 men teachers age 40 and above are still in the lower scales (22.5% of men teachers age 40+), 127 women teachers are on these scales (73.4% of women teachers aged 40+). Thus, age is not rewarded with high status for three-quarters of women teachers or for one-quarter of men teachers. Is this because these women and men teachers are lacking in experience? Is their length of service significantly different to that of their higher scaled counterparts?

#### Table IV

In general, half of the sample teachers had less than ten years





Table III

Age Distribution by Age of Sample Teachers:

Sample	Ages 20-29		30-39		40-49		50-59		60+		Total	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	M	F
Sample 1	5	17	29	59	5	34	2	27		5	41	142
2			31	52	20	29	3	27	1	5	55	113
3			11	6	21	10	3	9	1	4	36	29
4			3	2	20	1	11	1	4	1	38	5
Senior teachers												
Head Masters/Mistresses					4		4	2	1		9	2
Deputy Heads: group 01-04 schools				1	3	1	1	1			4	3
Deputy Heads: group 05-09 schools			2	2	8	1	1	4			11	7
Deputy Heads: group 10-13 schools					1		1	1	4	1	6	2
Teachers: groups 01-04 schools					4	2	1	3			5	5
05-09 schools					3	1	5	1	2	2	10	4
10-13 schools					1		2		1		4	
	5	17	76	122	90	79	34	76	14	18	219	312

Table IV

Length of Experience of Sample Teachers: Male and Female

	Under 5 years		5.5 to 10 years		10.5 to 15 years		15.5 to 20 years		20.5 to 25 years		25.5 to 30 years		30.5 to 35 years		35.5 + years		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Males	38	17.4	45	20.5	55	25.1	38	17.4	21	9.6	13	5.9	9	4.1	-	-	219	100
Females	87	27.9	94	30.1	72	23.1	33	10.6	15	4.8	6	1.9	4	1.3	1	0.3	312	100
	125	23.7	139	26.4	127	23.9	71	13.0	36	6.8	19	3.6	13	2.4	1	0.2	531	100

experience, 37.9% of the male teachers and 58.0% of the female teachers, whereas only 13% of the sample had more than twenty years teaching experience, 19.6% of the male teachers and 8.3% of the female teachers. Thus, the male teachers did have more experience in general than the female teachers. The effects of this on the scale positions is shown in Table V. The deputy head posts have been grouped together and the head posts have been combined.

As might be expected, of those teachers with less than ten years teaching experience (264 teachers), 68 male teachers and 173 female teachers (241 teachers) were on scales 1 and 2 (91.3% of those with less than ten years experience). Only 8.7% had already moved beyond these basic scales, (15 men and 8 women). But, of those with more than twenty years teaching experience (69 teachers, 43 men and 26 women), 11 women (42.3% of these women with more than twenty years experience) compared with 1 man were on scales 1 or 2.

Of those with a mid-career amount of teaching experience, between ten and twenty years (198 teachers, 93 men and 105 women), 71 women (67.6% of women with between ten and twenty years teaching experience) and 27 men (29% of men with between ten and twenty years teaching experience) were on scales 1 and 2. 48 men (52% of men with mid-career experience) and 12 women (11.4% of women with mid career experience) were on scale 4 and higher scales.

Thus length of experience does go some way towards explaining achievement differentials within the teaching profession between men and women teachers. For the majority of men teachers, length of experience is correlated with scale position. Thus of the 136 men with more than



Table V

Length of Experience by Scale for Sample Teachers: Male and Female

<u>Experience</u>	SCALES 1		2		3		4		Senior Second Master/Mis		Deputy Heads		Heads		TOTALS	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Under 5 years	28	65	9	22	1										38	87
5.5 to 10 years	10	40	21	46	11	4	2	1			1	3			45	94
10.5 to 15 years	2	30	18	23	12	15	13	2	2		8			2	55	72
15.5 to 20 years	1	5	6	13	6	7	10	1	2	1	3	4	10	2	38	33
20.5 to 25 years		1		8	5	2	7	1	2		3	3	4		21	15
25.5 to 30 years			1	1	1	1	5		3		1	1	2	3	13	6
30.5 to 35 years		1					1			1	5	1	3	1	9	4
35.5 + years														1	-	1
	41	142	55	113	36	29	38	5	9	2	21	12	19	9	219	312

ten years teaching experience, 108 (79%) were on scale 3 or above. But for women teachers some other factor is required to explain why over 40% of women with more than twenty years teaching experience and nearly 70% of women with between ten and twenty years experience are still on scales 1 and 2.

	Males		Females	
	Numbers	%	Numbers	%
<u>INITIAL AND POST-ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS</u>	72	42	66	21.2
Teaching Certificate	100	45.7	179	57.4
<u>Initial Qualifications</u>	27	12.3	67	21.5

Are there any substantial differences in the initial qualifications of teachers that can be associated with achievement differences within the profession? Are there significant differences between men and women teachers or are the most important differences within the male and female categories? There are some differences in the initial qualifications of male and female teachers.

#### Table VI

Graduate teachers are more often male, while certificated and now BEd teachers are more often female. This distribution probably reflects the fact that, in the past, but also to an extent in the present, young women who had done well at school were more likely to be encouraged to undertake teacher training than to embark on a degree at a university. The effect of differences in initial qualifications on current scale positions is shown in table VII.

For men teachers a degree does not appear to give any real advantage in reaching high scale positions (although it does give a small advantage in salary terms since graduates do begin higher up the scale than non-graduates). Thus 54 male graduates are currently on scale 3 or above (58.7% of male graduates) compared with 59 certificated teachers (59% of

Table VI

Initial Teaching Qualification of Sample Teachers: Male and Female

	Males		Females	
	Numbers	%	Numbers	%
Graduates, with or without PGCE	92	42	66	21.2
Teaching Certificate	100	45.7	179	57.4
BEd (Hons or Ord)	27	12.3	67	21.5
	219	100	312	100.1

Table VII

Initial Qualification by Scale for Sample Teachers: Male and Female

Grads with or without PGCE  
Teaching Certificate  
BEd (Hons and Ord)

SCALE 1		2		3		4		Senior Second Master/Mis		Deputy Heads		Heads		Totals	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
22	33	16	20	13	8	24	2	5	1	7	2	5		92	66
10	73	31	67	17	18	10	2	4	1	14	9	14	9	100	179
9	36	8	26	6	3	4	1				1			27	67
41	142	55	113	36	29	38	5	9	2	21	12	19	9	219	312



male certificated teachers). BEd teachers have not yet been in the system long enough to reflect all the career stages. scale 3, 5 were scale 2 and 2 were scale 1, but 10 were heads with under twenty years experience. However for women teachers, a degree constitutes a handicap for the highest scale positions, since women teachers with degrees tend to enter secondary schools and there they are unlikely to rise above scale 3 positions. All the women heads and 9 out of 12 of the women deputy heads were in primary schools and had teaching certificates initially. For female teachers the certificated teacher had a disadvantage. Differences in initial teaching qualifications are related to different career achievements between men and women teachers. therefore, in so far as the different entry qualifications tend to lead to teaching careers in different types of school. Among the men teachers in the sample, if length of experience is controlled for, then certificated teachers appear to have an advantage in reaching high scaled positions (headships), although there is more spread. Thus, after twenty years teaching experience (43 men), of the 23 graduates, 2 were heads, 5 were deputy heads, 3 were senior teachers, 9 were scale 4 and 4 were scale 3. Of the 20 male certificated teachers with at least twenty years in the experience, 7 were heads, 4 were deputies, 2 were senior teachers, 4 were scale 4, 2 were scale 3 and 1 was scale 2. But 10 males were heads with less than 20 years experience (3 graduates and 7 certificated teachers). Teaching certificate has been down-graded by its replacement with the BEd degree. So the important are post-entry qualifications in the system. However, amongst the women teachers, if experience is controlled, teachers graduate status is a disadvantage in reaching high scaled positions. Thus after twenty years teaching experience (26 women), of the 9 graduates, 1 teacher was a deputy head, 1 was a senior teacher, 1 was a scale 4, 1 was a scale 3 and 5 were scale 2 teachers. Of the 17 this

certificated female teachers with more than twenty years teaching experience, 5 were heads, 3 were deputy heads, 2 were scale 3, 5 were scale 2 and 2 were scale 1. But 4 women were heads with under twenty years experience (all certificated teachers). All the women headships were in primary or infant schools. But post-entry qualifications do not

explain much of the difference in achievement between men and women. So we can conclude that amongst the men teachers in the sample, the certificated teacher had a moderate advantage in reaching the highest scale positions. For female teachers the certificated teacher had a clear advantage in gaining the headship of infant, but also of primary schools. But differences in initial teaching qualification cannot explain much of the overall differences in achievement between men and women teachers except in so far as the differences in initial qualifications lead to careers in different types of school. 5

women were heads with no additional qualifications, 3 women were heads with additional qualifications, 2 with diplomas, 1 with a degree.

Post-Entry Qualifications

For most professional occupations, qualifications do not end with entry into the profession. At the least, the professional teacher is faced with keeping up with knowledge and/or pedagogical developments in the field and some teachers wish to do more than this and acquire further academic or teacher-relevant qualifications. Indeed, some certificated teachers have felt obliged to undertake an in-service degree since they feel the teaching certificate has been down-graded by its replacement with the BEd degree. So how important are post-entry qualifications in explaining differences in scale positions among teachers? For teachers in the sample, only academic or diploma awarding courses are entered on the Teachers Service Cards so the data does not cover other short courses, in-service courses, or conversion courses. In fact, post-entry qualifications do not seem to be very important for teachers in this

sample: 88% of the teachers had no further qualifications, 80% of men teachers and 93% of women teachers had no further qualifications.

#### Table VIII

The women teachers in the sample were less qualified in post entry credentials than the men teachers. But post-entry qualifications do not explain much of the difference in achievement between men and women teachers overall.

#### Table IX

The most popular post-entry qualifications are the part-time degree, for teachers with an initial teaching certificate (28) and the diploma (21). The numbers with such qualifications are so small however, that they seem insignificant as far as high scaled posts are concerned. Thus, 15 men were heads with no further qualifications, 4 men were heads with some additional qualifications (2 with diplomas, 2 with a degree). 6 women were heads with no additional qualifications, 3 women were heads with some additional qualifications (2 with diplomas, 1 with a degree).

#### Types of Career

An analysis of different types of career is limited with the kind of data that is available from the service cards. A further elaboration of this concept will be carried out following the interview research. But the cards do give information on whether teachers careers have been continuous, interrupted, or entered late, and it is this data which forms the basis of the present examination.

Following Hilsum and Start (1974), I have classified teachers careers into three main types: unbroken careers, re-entrants (those with broken service) and late entrants (those who entered teaching after working elsewhere). I have revised certain of Hilsum and Start's operational

Table VIII

Post-entry Qualifications of the Teacher Sample: Male and Female

	Males		Females	
	Numbers	Percentages	Numbers	Percentages
None	175	79.9	291	93.3
PhD	2		1	
MA/MPhil/MSc	7		2	
Diploma	12		9	
Degree p-t	20		8	
Degree f-t	1		1	
Second Degree	2			
	219		312	



Table IX

Post-entry Qualifications by Current Scale: Males and Females

Post-entry Quals	SCALES 1		2		3		4		Senior Second Last/Mis		Deputy Heads		Heads	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
None	36	138	45	102	32	27	24	5	7	2	16	11	15	6
PhD			1	1	1									
MA/MPhil/MSc	2	1				1	5							
Diploma		2	1	5			6		2		1		2	2
Degree p-t	1		8	5	3	1	2				4	1	2	1
Degree f-t		1					1							
Second degree	2													
	41	142	55	113	36	29	38	5	9	2	21	12	19	9

definitions however. A broken career I define as a career interrupted for an interval of two or more years (Hilsun and Start defined their interval as five years). A late entrant, I define as those entering teaching five or more years after finishing full-time education (Hilsun and Start define late entry as fifteen years after leaving school).

Thus I have more re-entrants and late entrants in my sample than would have been the case with Hilsun and Start's original definitions.

Unbroken

	Males		Females	
	Numbers	Percentages	Numbers	Percentages
Unbroken	175	79.9	160	51.3
Re-entry				16.0
Late entry	219	100%	312	100%

The percentages of men and women teachers in the sample having the different types of career are indicated in Table X.

About 80% of the men teachers had an unbroken career compared with only half of the women teachers. Re-entry was the career pattern for one third of the women teachers, but this was an insignificant type of career for men teachers. Roughly the same percentages of men and women teachers had been late entrants to the teaching profession. The effect of the different types of career on the scale positions of the sample teachers is shown in Table XI.

It seems that a career involving a break and a re-entry is a significant pattern for women teachers and from this table it appears that this type of career does constitute a handicap for women teachers in reaching high scaled positions. Thus, of the 102 female re-entrants, 83 (81.4%) were on scales 1 and 2. Only 1 women re-entrant was a head and 3 were deputy heads. Late entry to teaching does not constitute much of a handicap for men teachers desiring a high scaled position. Late entry is more of a handicap for women teachers since 45 of the 50 female late entrants were on scales 1 and 2.

Table X.

Types of Career of Teacher Sample: Male and Female

Types of Career:	Males		Females	
	Numbers	Percentages	Numbers	Percentages
Unbroken	175	79.9	160	51.3
Re-entrants	7	3.2	102	32.7
Late entrants	37	16.9	50	16.0
	219	100%	312	100%

Table XI

Types of Career by Scale for Sample Teachers: Male and Female

Types of Career:	SCALE 1		2		3		4		Senior Second Master/Mis		Deputy Head		Heads		Totals	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Unbroken	28	70	46	57	29	14	32	3	8	1	18	8	14	7	175	160
Re-entrants	4	52	1	31	1	12	-	2	-	1	-	3	1	1	7	102
Late entrants	9	20	8	25	6	3	6	-	1		3	1	4	1	37	50
	41	142	55	113	36	29	38	5	9	2	21	12	19	9	219	312



Unbroken teaching experience is a much less common career pattern for women than for men; only 50% of the female sample had unbroken experience. In the sample, 175 men and 160 women had unbroken careers so far, but 44.5% of the female sample were under the age of 40 (139 women) and therefore, many of these 160 women with unbroken experience are likely to break their service in the future to start their families. The best way to control for this is to correlate length of teaching experience by scale for those teachers with unbroken careers. The results of this are in Table XII.

There were significant differences between the men and women teachers with unbroken careers in terms of their length of teaching experience. Of the 175 men teachers with unbroken careers, 60 had been teaching for less than ten years (34.3%); 49 were on scales 1 and 2, and 11 were on higher scales. But of the 160 women teachers with unbroken careers, 111 had been teaching for less than ten years (69.4%). Thus, of those teachers with unbroken careers, there were more women than men with fewer than ten years teaching experience. In terms of length of experience alone, it would be expected that these women would be on the lower scales. Thus 104 of the 111 women with less than 10 years teaching experience were on scales 1 and 2, and 7 women were on higher scales. It is interesting to note that 3 women with less than ten years teaching experience were already deputy heads of primary schools.

Of the 175 men teachers with unbroken careers, 80 had been teaching for between 10 and 20 years (45.7% of those with unbroken careers). Of these 80, 24 were on scales 1 and 2, 38 were on scales 3 to senior master, and 18 were deputy heads and heads. But of the 160 women teachers with unbroken careers, only 36 had been teaching for between

Table XII

Length of Experience by Scale for Sample Teachers with Unbroken Careers: Male and Female

	SCALES								Senior Second Master/Mis		Deputy Head		Heads		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Up to 5 years	20	51	4	16											24	67
5.5 to 10 years	6	10	19	27	9	3	2	1				3			36	44
10.5 to 15 years	2	8	16	8	9	8	11	2	2		8		2		48	28
15.5 to 20 years			6	3	6	1	8		2		2	3	8	1	32	8
20.5 to 25 years		1		3	4	2	6		2		3		3		18	6
25.5 to 30 years			1		1		4		2		1	1	1	2	10	3
30.5 to 35 years							1			1	4	1	2	1	7	3
35.5+														1		1
	28	70	46	57	29	14	32	3	8	1	18	8	14	7	175	160

ten and twenty years (22.5% of women with unbroken careers). Of these 36 women, 19 were on scales 1 and 2, 11 were on scales 3 and 4, and 6 were deputy heads and heads.

Of those with twenty or more years of unbroken teaching experience, there were considerably fewer women (13) than men (35). Of the 35 men, 14 were heads or deputies, 20 were scales 3 to senior master and only 1 man was a scale 2. Of the 13 women, 6 were heads or deputies, 3 were scale 3 to senior mistress and 4 were scales 1 and 2.

Thus of those teachers in the sample with unbroken careers, the women more than the men, were at early stages in their careers: they had significantly fewer years of teaching experience. Many of these might in the near future break their service to have children. In a bureaucratic career structure, length of service is an important factor influencing career achievements.

So the fact that women (more than men) break their careers is an important factor in explaining the differential achievements in the teaching profession between men and women. This can be demonstrated by those teachers with unbroken service. There were considerably fewer women than men with unbroken experience at all stages apart from the early stages of the teaching career. But of those with continuous service, the chances of promotion were not significantly different between the sexes. Thus, of those teachers with more than twenty years unbroken teaching experience, just under half of the women were heads and deputies and rather less than half of the men were heads and deputies. Two points of qualification have to be made, however. Firstly, the women were heads and deputies of primary and infant schools

only. Secondly, there is more chance of being on a low scale for women teachers even with twenty years unbroken teaching experience.

The importance of types of career can also be demonstrated by considering the re-entrants, those who have interrupted their teaching careers for two or more years. The scale positions of re-entrants is shown in Table XIII together with the length of experience of the re-entrants. There were only 7 male re-entrants in the sample compared with 102 females.

A career with breaks and re-entries is highly significant for career achievement in that such a career pattern reduces the length of teaching experience of the women teachers. Thus 91 of the 102 women re-entrants had less than twenty years teaching experience; 72 had less than fifteen years. The most obvious consequence of this is that the women re-entrants were concentrated on the lower teaching scales: 83 of the 102 were on scales 1 and 2.

It may be the case, therefore, that the re-entry career pattern needs further refinement. Where the career is broken, for a relatively short period of time and the teacher returns to teaching, possibly via a brief period of part-time or supply work, and then continues in teaching with no further break, this may have only small career consequences. But the teacher who returns, then leaves, and returns again, and continues to serve intermittently for a considerable period, this pattern will have much greater career consequences in promotional terms (I hope to be able to throw further light on these career differences in the second stage of my research on women teachers lives and careers).

Table XIII

Length of Experience by Scale for Re-Entrants: Males and Females

Length of experience	SCALES 1		2		3		4		Senior Second Master/Mis		Deputy Heads		Heads		Totals	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Up to 5 years		7														7
5.5 to 10 years	3	22	1	9											4	31
10.5 to 15 years		17		11		6										34
15.5 to 20 years	1	5		7		5			1		1				1	19
20.5 to 25 years		1		3	1			2			2				1	8
25.5 to 30 years				1		1								1		3
30.5 to 35 years													1		1	
35.5 + years																
	4	52	1	31	1	12	-	2	-	1	-	3	1	1	7	102

Late entry to the teaching profession is another career variant that needs to be considered. The scale distribution of late entrants is not unusual in that most differences can be explained by length of experience. The percentages of male and female late entrants in the sample were similar: 16.9% of the men teachers were late entrants (37 teachers) and 16% of the women teachers were late entrants (50 teachers). The scale distribution of the late entry teachers according to their length of teaching experience is as shown in Table XIV.

Most of the late entrants on low scales had short periods of teaching experience: 15 men and 31 women on scales 1 and 2 had less than ten years teaching experience. Only 8 late entrants had more than twenty years teaching experience. However, 45 out of 50 women late entrants were on scales 1 and 2 compared with 17 out of 37 men.

We must conclude therefore that length of experience is the most important factor associated with differential achievements in the teachers bureaucratic career structure. Differences in length of experience are best explained by different types of career and it is this phenomenon which requires further investigation.

Table XIV

Length of Experience	Men	Women
0 to 5 years	15	31
5.5 to 10 years	10	15
10.5 to 15 years	5	10
15.5 to 20 years	3	5
20.5 to 25 years	2	3
25.5 to 30 years	1	2
30.5 to 35 years	1	1
35+	0	0
Total	37	50



Table XIV

Length of Experience by Scale for Late Entrants: Male and Female

	SCALE 1		2		3		4		Senior Second Master/Mis		Deputy Heads		Heads		Totals	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Up to 5 years	8	7	5	5	1										14	12
5.5 to 10 years	1	8	1	11	2	1					1				5	20
10.5 to 15 years		5	2	5	3	1	2								7	11
15.5 to 20 years				3		1	2				1		2	1	5	5
20.5 to 25 years				1			1					1	1		2	2
25.5 to 30 years							1		1				1		3	-
30.5 to 35 years											1				1	
35+																
	9	20	8	25	6	3	6	-	1	-	3	1	4	1	37	50

In conclusion, it seems that length of experience is the factor that is rewarded in the bureaucratic career structure of teaching and this is an important part of the explanation of differential career achievements between men and women teachers and of differential achievements within the male teacher and female teacher categories. However, length of experience does not account for all the differences in scale positions among teachers.

First, it is necessary to note that, as in all occupations, some of the differences can be accounted for by individualistic factors. There are teachers who are highly competent but because they lack self-confidence, push, or the ability to be mobile, remain in their original scale positions. Alternatively, there are other teachers, equally competent, but who are more highly visible and who manage through flair, forceful personality and the ability to move when opportunities present themselves, to secure unusually rapid advancement.

Differences in initial qualifications can explain some differences in career achievements between men and women teachers because different entry qualifications lead to teaching careers in different types of school. From the sample, it seems that for men teachers, the holders of teaching certificates have had the advantage over degree holders in reaching high scaled positions. For women teachers, there has been a clear advantage for certificated teachers in achieving high scaled positions in primary schools. Post-entry qualifications, (however, with the possible exception of the part-time degree and the diploma), have not been significant in explaining differential career achievements between teachers. Higher degrees and doctorates have been little help in ensuring promotion. However, it is possible that there might be

changes in respect of post-entry qualifications in the future. Teaching is becoming an all graduate profession as the BEd degree has replaced the teaching certificate as the initial qualification. It will be interesting to note how certificate holders (of which there are more women than men) will respond to this down-grading of their teaching qualification. Will they opt out of the promotion race, or will they work for their in-service BEd or other post-entry qualifications in an attempt to secure promotion? In the second part of my research, I hope to be able to show how some women teachers are responding to the possibility of down-grading of the initial teaching certificate.

In so far as length of experience is important for career achievement in teaching, it is necessary to try to understand why the length of experience of women teachers is in many instances less than that of men teachers. The answer is obvious: the large majority of women teachers break their careers in order to have and to care for young children. Their re-entry to teaching is often by part-time (currently being abolished or severely cut-back) or supply work, their service might be intermittent for several years and their eventual re-entry into a full-time permanent teaching post dependent on family circumstances. Most part-time or supply work is paid on scale 1 rates regardless of the women's position prior to leaving her post, so the promotional ladder appears as an unrealistic goal, often meaningless to returning women teachers.

In other words, types of career are the crucial explanatory variable for women teachers. The types of career available for analysis in the objective dimension are limited by the nature of the data available, but some generalisations can be made. A continuous, unbroken career is no

guarantee of high scale position for men or women, but the promotional chances for men and women teachers with unbroken careers are not significantly different. Late entry is more of a handicap for women teachers than men teachers, although most of the differences in the achievement of high scaled positions by later entrants can be accounted for by length of experience. A break in the career is a serious handicap which affects women teachers rather than men teachers and can be reflected in the women teacher having different career goals. Some women re-entrants do achieve high scale positions and this indicates some reconciliation of family and work career goals.

Clearly this is an area requiring further analysis and this cannot be carried out using statistical techniques on the teachers service cards. Analysis of the subjective dimension using interview techniques in an attempt to collect data on women teachers life histories will enable an examination to be made of family responsibilities and the effect of family on work and career ambitions. There are important differences among women teachers in their attitudes to their families, their work and their career goals and it is important to emphasise that all teachers do not have the same career ambitions. Thus, analysis of the objective dimension has resulted in the emergence of a number of important themes to be taken up and reanalysed according to the meaning they have for individual women teachers. The broken/re-entry career needs considerable elaboration. How important is the length of the break and the type of the re-entry (supply, part-time, full-time)? How did the re-entry come about: was it sought by the teacher or was the teacher requested to return by significant others (colleagues, heads)? How do women teachers see their teaching careers and how does their view of their career change over their lives? At what stage do some women

teachers become career ambitious (early in their career, or after their re-entry)? Clearly there is a great deal that remains to be understood about women teachers, their families and their work.

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5. Hilda and R. B. East (1971), Promotion and Career in Education, p. 307, explains the unit total system as follows:

'Each pupil under thirteen adds one-and-a-half points to the unit total, those aged thirteen to fifteen, two points, fifteen to sixteen, four points, sixteen to seventeen, six points and over seventeen, ten points.'

The 'unit total' also determines the group to which a school is allocated.

There are many more headships of primary and infant than of secondary schools because there are a larger number of primary and infant

## NOTES

1. Hakim (1979) has drawn attention to the difference between 'horizontal' occupational segregation (where men and women do different kinds of jobs) and 'vertical' occupational segregation (where men and women are at different grades or levels of promotion, within the same occupation). Obviously, in considering the one occupation of teaching, I am concerned with vertical occupational segregation.
2. The criteria for determining the responsibilities and the salaries of head teachers of schools of varying sizes and for deciding the number and type of promotion posts available in a school, are the number and age of pupils on roll. These are compounded into one basic operating principle called the 'unit total'.

G. Hilsum and K. B. Start (1974), Promotion and Careers in Teaching, p.307, explains the unit total system as follows:

"Each pupil under thirteen adds one-and-a-half points to the unit total, those aged thirteen to fifteen, two points, fifteen to sixteen, four points, sixteen to seventeen, six points and over seventeen, ten points."

The 'unit total' then determines the group to which a school is allocated.

There are many more headships of primary and infant than of secondary schools because there are a larger number of primary and infant

schools. But these headships are much less rewarding in financial terms because of the unit total system and the smaller size of the primary and infant schools.

3. Shirley Dex, The Sexual Division of Work. Dex is concerned to show in her book, how the study of women's work has resulted in considerable conceptual modifications and changes in sociology in general. The concept of 'career' is one illustration of this. Dex has shown (1984 and 1984A) how women's work histories can be analysed although she prefers the term 'profile' to the term 'career' which she claims remains heavily male orientated.
4. In general, three years occupational or home making experience counts for one increment although at the local education authorities discretion, relevant industrial experience after the age of twenty one can be awarded on a one to one basis. Periods of less than three years experience are rounded down.
5. Lyons, G (1981), claims p. 63:

"... a bureaucratic career structure exists in the comprehensive school and progression through the stages is almost inevitably related to age and experience."

## 2. Becoming Career Ambitious

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BECOMING CAREER AMBITIOUS: THE CAREER STRATEGIES  
OF MARRIED WOMEN WHO BECAME PRIMARY HEAD TEACHERS IN THE 1960'S  
AND 1970'S

Introduction

How do some married women primary and infant teachers become career ambitious and at what stage do they begin to climb the promotional ladder that leads eventually to headship posts and beyond? My data comes from life history interviews with 15 women who were primary or infant headteachers. One of the headteachers had been promoted to the inspectorate a couple of months prior to the interview. A further ten women primary headteachers from a different area of the county have been interviewed subsequently and data from these women will be included in future articles. All of this sample (except the inspector) were currently heads of schools in one area, the city area, of one midlands county. The sample consisted of 50%, or 1 in 2 of the women primary and infant heads in the city area who had been 'once married'. The headteachers names and school addresses were obtained from the local education authority and they were contacted initially by letter asking if they would be willing to take part in the research. Two headteachers had refused; one because of a recent bereavement, the other because of pressure of work. All the women headteachers had been once married although I didn't know in advance their current marital status. Neither was it possible to know in advance the extent of their family commitments; in particular, whether they had or did not have children.

First it is important to emphasize that these women were seeking their headships in the 1960s or in the 1970s. The economic and political climate of that time was very different from the current situation. The 1960s was a time of political optimism and economic expansion from which

education benefitted directly. In addition, the post-war increase in the birthrate was maintained until the 1960s. This had resulted in expansion of schools and, inspite of emergency training of teachers after the war, there was a shortage of teachers, particularly in the infant sector. Married women teachers were encouraged to return to the classrooms. Many local education authorities established nurseries for women teachers' children in an attempt to staff their increasing and expanding schools. Class sizes of 40-45 were not uncommon in the 1960s, as some of these headteachers reported. In the 1970s this expansion was curtailed and in the 1980s it was reversed. Today the picture is very different. Teachers now face a general contraction of the education system. The reasons are complex but at the national level there has been a reduction in economic prosperity, an increase in central control of the financing of education and a fall in school rolls because of a reduction in the birth rate in the 1970s. At the local level, there has been the amalgamation or closure of smaller schools, a cut-back in promotion posts and a general reduction in teacher mobility. This, together with the discontent amongst teachers and the recent disruption of the school day in pursuit of a pay claim makes teaching a very different kind of occupation. For new teachers entering the profession today, the chances are that their career prospects will not be so bright. The experiences of the women headteachers in this study might be more characteristic of a period of teacher shortage and educational expansion, therefore. Ball and Goodson (1985) and Sikes et al (1985) have emphasized how all teachers careers are greatly influenced by economic, political and social factors external to the occupation itself.

The concept of a 'career' can be confusing since it can be used in different ways and in a variety of contexts. Dex (1985) has considered some of the alternative meanings. She has shown how 'career' can be used

as a descriptive concept in attempts to catalogue the changes in occupations made by individuals throughout their working lives. In this sense, career is equivalent to a work history. But career can also include the notion of progress or advancement through an ordered sequence of occupations into more responsible and higher paid roles. This view is particularly appropriate for careers within bureaucratic organisations. Thus, Wilensky (1960) used career in this sense, implying promotion and advancement, when he defined a career as "a succession of related jobs, arranged in a hierarchy of prestige, through which persons move in an ordered, predictable sequence". Clearly, teaching is an occupation with a bureaucratic career structure. Certainly, the women headteachers in this study, obviously because of their own progress and achievement, were sure that their careers had involved promotion into more responsible, higher status and salaried roles. In addition, a further crucial distinction has been made by Hughes (1937) between objective and subjective dimensions of a career and this has been emphasized by Woods (1983) in respect of teachers careers. The objective dimension consists of the system of clearly defined statuses and offices which is the formal career structure. In the teaching profession, the objective career structure is made up of the scaled posts, heads of departments, deputy head and headteacher posts within which teachers careers are constructed (see Evetts, 1985). The subjective dimension, however, consists of the teachers own changing perspectives towards their careers; how individuals actually experience their careers, (Connell, 1985). As teachers experience changes in their family situations, in schools themselves and even in the national economy (Ball and Goodson, 1985), so they will experience changes in their career plans and ambitions. It is important to remember therefore, in respect of these women headteachers careers, that the notions of progress, advance

and success are subjective.

Similar caution needs to be exercised in the use of the term 'ambitious'. The women headteachers in this study were reluctant to apply this term to themselves since, for most of them, the term seemed to be derogatory. To be ambitious would be to promote oneself and one's career at the expense of other important responsibilities, like home and family; to put career first and these other things second in one's order of priorities. These heads did not see themselves in this way. They had achieved, modestly, in their chosen field but not, for most of them, at the expense of their homes and families. I propose, therefore, to use the term 'career ambitious' more in the sense of the woman's first awareness of the promotion ladder and of her perception of her own wish to attempt to climb that ladder.

In this study, women primary headteachers were chosen because primary teaching is an example of an occupation in which women outnumber men; according to national statistics, (DES, 1984), 78% of teachers in maintained primary schools in England and Wales are women. Also, it is an occupation in which women can and do achieve promotion; 45% of primary headteachers are women. These proportions have altered only slightly over the period in which these women were applying for headships. In 1975, 77% of teachers in primary schools in England and Wales were women and 43% of headteachers in primary schools were women (DES, 1975). In 1965, 74% of teachers and 48% of headteachers in primary schools were women (DES, 1966). Thus the headteacher position does represent a modest degree of success and achievement in career terms for the women who make it. This is not to say that women teachers who remain on scales one and two are likely to feel unsuccessful in career terms. The notions of success are subjective and a married woman teacher with her own children might be

content to remain on the lower scales and might be unwilling to take on the additional responsibilities that go with higher scaled posts. For such women this may constitute a successful compromise of family and work commitments and responsibilities. However, the women in this study had opted for career advancement and achievement in addition to their family responsibilities and they had been successful certainly in their pursuit of a career goal.

The career achievement of a primary or an infant headship is a modest achievement, however. Most primary and particularly infant schools are small. There are many more headships of primary and particularly infant schools than secondary schools, but these headships are much less rewarding in financial and status terms than the headships of secondary schools. This is because of the operation of what has come to be called the unit total system. The unit total is a complex formula whereby the number and age of pupils on roll is scored in order to determine the group to which a school is allocated. The group in which a school is placed then determines both the responsibilities and salaries of headteachers and the number and type of promotion posts available in a school. Thus, as a consequence of the operation of the unit total system and the smaller size and younger ages of pupils of primary and particularly infant schools, the headships of these schools are less rewarding in financial terms and the number and type of promotion posts available in such schools are considerably fewer than in secondary schools, (NUT, 1980).

Also, it should be emphasized that the headteacher position is not the peak, the highest point of achievement, in primary teachers career ambitions. One of the sample had already moved on, into the inspectorate. Other headteachers mentioned this as a possible future career advancement. There were other possibilities: headships of larger (higher unit total) promotion out of the county. All had achieved all of their promotions



schools; a move to college lecturing. So these women were not necessarily at the pinnacle of their careers. There were possibilities above and beyond their headteacher achievements.

In examining these women teachers careers alongside their family commitments and responsibilities, I wanted to know how they had decided to seek promotion and at what stage in their careers they had begun to apply for higher scaled posts. In addition, I was interested in the extent to which these women had a clearly perceived and executed career plan. Finally, I wanted to discover if these women had been geographically mobile in their careers: how far they had changed schools and moved between different county educational areas or moved to different areas of the country in order to achieve their promotions.

In the text, pseudonyms have been used for the headteachers and these are listed alphabetically in the table below:

	TYPE OF SCHOOL	AGE CATEGORY
Mrs. Butler	Infants	45 - 54
Mrs. Collins	Infants	55+
Mrs. Curtis	Primary	45 - 54
Mrs. Dawson	Infants	45 - 54
Mrs. Edwards	Infants	35 - 44
Mrs. Ellis	Infants	45 - 54
Mrs. Firth	Infants	55+
Mrs. Grant	Primary	35 - 44
Mrs. Gilbert	Primary	35 - 44
Mrs. Howard	Primary	45 - 54
Mrs. Porter	Primary	45 - 54
Mrs. Spencer	Infants	45 - 54
Mrs. Tanner	Infants	55+
Mrs. Taylor	Primary	45 - 54
Mrs. Williams	Infants	35 - 44

#### Mobility in the Career

The first factor of importance in the careers of these women headteachers was geographical stability. None of these heads had achieved promotion out of the county. All had achieved all of their promotions

within the one education authority. Indeed, several had taught and achieved their promotions only in city schools. For such teachers, their careers had been constructed in a small number of schools all within the one local education authority area, the city area. Thus, Mrs. Tanner had spent the whole of her teaching career in a small number of city schools.

"The first post that came up was deputy in my own school. One of the other teachers was applying and I thought if she can apply, I can. So we did. It must have created terrible problems. Anyway they didn't appoint (1957). They readvertised, we reapplied and they appointed someone from outside. Very sensible. Meanwhile there are other jobs coming up. So I'm on the bandwagon then. Eventually I got a deputy headship in 1958 at what was this school, only it was the old school. I was deputy head for five years (1958-63). Then I became head at an infants school (in another part of the city, aged 33). I was there for four years (1963-67) and then I came back here to the old school as head."

Other heads had spent the whole of their teaching careers within the one city area of the county. Mrs. Grant had been trained in the city and had taught only in city schools. Mrs. Curtis had taught only in city schools. Mrs. Collins had taught in city schools except that on her return to teaching, she had taught in a school close to where she was living. This was in an area adjacent to the city. Her promotions to deputy and to head were in city schools. Mrs. Ellis had worked only in city schools apart from her first two teaching posts at the beginning of her career; all her promotions had been within city schools. Mrs. Edwards had taught only in city schools, since she and her husband came to the area. Indeed, until she moved for her headship, she had worked and achieved her promotions to deputy head all in one school in the city.

Other heads had worked in different parts of the country early in their careers but it is interesting that their promotions were all achieved within schools in the city and after they had been able to

acquire a degree of stability within the local city area. Mrs. Butler began her teaching career in the city. Then, after a seven year period in a different part of the midlands during which time she had her two children, she returned to teaching in city schools. All of her promotions were achieved in schools in the city. Mrs. Williams' career was of a similar kind. Since Mrs. Williams and her husband moved to the area, she had always taught in city schools and her career advancement was very rapid once this stability was achieved.

"When we moved here, I went to a primary school in (a city district) where I taught infants. After a year I got a scale 2 (1972). Then I got a scale 3 there (1973). Then in September 1974, I went as deputy to another infants school in the city. I was there for 5 years (1979). Then in 1979, I came here as head (aged 31). I've been here for 6 years."

Mrs. Gilbert had been geographically mobile early in her career because of her husband's work. But she did not begin to climb the promotion ladder until she and her husband were settled in the area. Her deputy headship was in an educational area adjacent to the city and her headship was in a city school. Similarly, Mrs. Spencer had been very geographically mobile early in her teaching career because of her husband's job. But, like Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Gilbert, she did not begin to climb the promotion ladder until she was geographically settled. Her promotions were all in city schools. Mrs. Firth had been mobile between secondary, junior and infant schools in her career but she had taught only in city schools since she came to the area in 1954. Mrs. Firth had climbed the career ladder twice; she had achieved the post of deputy head in a city junior school before taking time off teaching to care for her two daughters. When she returned to full-time teaching, in 1969, she moved to infant teaching and she went back as a scale one teacher. She achieved her first headship five years after her return to full-time teaching (age

45). All of her promotions, both before she left full-time teaching to care for her own children and after her return, were in schools in the city area.

So it seems that for these women headteachers careers, stability within a local educational area and mobility only between a small number of city schools were important in their career development. The ability to be geographically mobile in order to achieve promotion in the career did not seem to have been relevant for these women primary and infant heads.

#### The Beginnings of Career Ambition

Another factor of significance in the careers of these women headteachers was the stage at which they began to seek promotion: when they became career ambitious. For the women who had taken time off teaching to care for their own young families, they did not begin to consider developments in their own careers until they had returned to teaching and their own children were settled in school. Mrs. Howard explained how, when both of her boys were at school full-time and were occupied during the day, then she began to take more positive steps to further her own career.

"I thought this was the time to do some further study. I'd learnt quite a lot from these two thundering little lads around and there were a lot of questions I wanted answers to. So I did a diploma, a Dip. Ed., not on secondment, I got a place that didn't cost me anything, I just wasn't earning for that year. That really was the turning point as far as the career goes because I enjoyed it far more than my teacher training. I found it extremely exciting. Everything seemed so much more relevant the second time round because I knew now exactly what they were talking about."

She had returned to teaching initially on a part-time supply basis before her second son had started school. But her own career had to wait until both her boys were settled and were occupied during the day.

"When I started teaching again after the children, I didn't think in career terms. I'd only thought at that stage of earning money in a way that I enjoyed. I don't think it was until the community teacher job that I thought about making .... I had no ambitions until then to go any further. The family came first."

Other heads confirmed this timing. Mrs. Tanner and Mrs. Collins had not thought about promotion until they had returned to teaching, until their children were settled in school and content, and until they had reassured themselves that they were coping with home and with teaching responsibilities. Only then did they begin to think that they might try for promotion. Mrs. Butler explained the beginnings of ambition for her in the following way:

"When I got back into teaching, I wasn't at all ambitious then. I was just happy to be a scale one and cope with the family. Then, when I'd returned, I found that, well, I could cope, if you like. I don't know, I suppose I felt more and more competent as the weeks went by and it wasn't as difficult as I had imagined."

Mrs. Edwards became career ambitious "almost as soon as I went back to teaching really." But clearly, family responsibilities continued to play an important part in the timing and planning of these women's careers. Mrs. Ellis made an important career decision (to move from junior to infant education) while she was looking after her own young children at home. The decision was made partly for career reasons: she thought promotion would be more easily achieved in an infant school; and partly for family reasons: her childcare and teaching responsibilities could be reconciled.

"I didn't want any responsibility initially. I wasn't seeking promotion. I had no vision of being a headteacher until I was at home with the children. Then when I went back into teaching, I moved to infant teaching (from junior) as something which would enable me to get on. I could fit into the scheme of things and I also saw a future in infant education where I could get on fairly rapidly. So I suppose I was an opportunist in that respect. I also saw that the



children could fit in. I went back to a school where there was a nursery they could go to. It worked very well because they had access to me if they needed me and vice versa. It was as ideal to me as it could be."

Mrs. Spencer did not begin to think of promotion until she had returned to teaching and even then, it was through the intervention of chance or luck factors that she became promotion conscious. She explained how when she returned to teaching at an infants school in the city, during her first year several of the staff left, including the head and the deputy.

"So I applied for the deputy headship. At the interview I did explain that it seemed a little cocky to apply for a deputy headship when I didn't even have a scaled post. But I explained the situation to the interviewing panel and they obviously decided that it was best ... you see I wasn't young. I was a mature teacher and I'd had a lot of experience. I hadn't been at that school for very long, only two terms, but I was already virtually doing the job of being deputy head by supporting the (new) head. They obviously decided that in that particular situation, it was best to appoint me to give stability to the staff so that I could help the new young teachers. So I missed a rung up the ladder somewhere, but it was just being in the right place at the right time, I suppose.

I didn't seek promotion, not until the circumstances at that school led me to think I would be the best person for the job in that situation. Then once I was a deputy head, I thought I could apply for and get a headship."

Mrs. Firth was unusual in this group of headteachers in that she had not achieved the post of deputy head before taking time off to care for her children. However, she denied that she was career ambitious before she had her children. She explained that she achieved her first promotion as a result of her desire to move from a secondary to a junior school.

"At that time (1956) it was difficult to get out of the secondary sector because the bulge of the post-war years was just entering. The inspector told me that the only way to get back into a junior school was by applying for promotion in a junior school. Now, at that time, women teachers were not paid the same as men teachers so that

promotion was easier for a woman up to the deputy head level. It may have been at the head level, but I don't know. Very few women applied. So I applied for what was then called a Principal Assistant in a junior school. There were only two applicants and I was one of them and I got the job. I stayed there for about four years (1956-1960) during which time two things happened. We got equal pay (brought in) over a period of five years, I believe, and they changed the title of the job from principal assistant to deputy head."

The first time that she was promoted, Mrs. Firth claimed that she had been made promotion conscious almost by accident, in her change from secondary to junior schools. After her return to teaching, because she had to return to a scale one post, she was motivated to achieve her former status. She achieved deputy head status, the second time around, and then five years after she returned full-time, she became a head. So inspite of her career achievements before she had her children, Mrs. Firth denied that she was career ambitious at that stage. She felt she was made promotion conscious almost by accident in her move from a secondary to a junior school and as a result of her 'demotion' on her return to full-time teaching.

Of course not all these married heads had taken time off teaching in order to care for their own young children. Mrs. Grant had continued to train and then to teach even while her daughter was very young. This was not a positive decision on her part, but she felt that this was because of the difficult family circumstances she was in at the time. Similarly, Mrs. Porter felt that she had had no choice about continuing in teaching. She had worked out of financial necessity because her husband had left her. Her children were six months and eighteen months old when she returned. These women had made their careers and been successful in them possibly even because of their difficult family circumstances.

Three of these women headteachers had had no children. But for

only one of the three was this a positive decision. Only Mrs. Williams out of this group of married heads had decided to have no children. For Mrs. Williams, career was more important than family. She had experienced the break-up of her marriage after four years; in fact, in the year that she had achieved her deputy headship. She had been living with her present partner for ten years, but she had decided to have no children.

She explained this in the following way:

"It was through career really. I didn't have time for children. And through things going wrong early on (with my marriage), anyway. I mean everything sort of went disastrously wrong. But I got too involved in my career to think of having time off for children. No, I've never wanted children. I just don't think I could cope with career and children personally speaking."

Of the other two heads without children, Mrs. Gilbert had put off having her own children because of her husband's career and until she had reached a certain stage in her own career. It was not so much that she had clear ambitions from the beginning. It was rather that she got caught up in the promotions race; having achieved one career goal, she set her sights on the next. In order to achieve her career goals, she had postponed her plans to have a family.

"I don't say I always wanted to be a headteacher. It wasn't an ambition from the outset. I felt I could be a deputy and then once I was a deputy, I thought I had the ability to be a headteacher. So, my original idea was that I would put it off until I was a deputy and then I would give up once I had shown I could be a deputy and then perhaps I would have a family. But then once I was a deputy, I thought well I would like to be a head now and then I thought well when I was a head and I had my own school, perhaps then I would have a family. But, of course, things don't always work out as you'd hoped, do they? You get rather on the older side, which was what happened to me."

So Mrs. Gilbert was not working to a clearly defined life and career plan. Once the Gilberts were settled in the city, Mrs. Gilbert

took steps to advance her career and family plans were postponed accordingly. But the family plans were not abandoned.

Mrs. Curtis had had no children, but again, this was not through choice. She had married late and they had not been able to have the child they would have wished. Indeed, Mrs. Curtis explained her career success as, in some way, a compensation for her late marriage and lack of children.

"If anybody had asked me in my early twenties, what my ambitions were, it would have been to have a home and family and that would be it. I saw teaching at the beginning as just a stop gap and I suppose most women did at that time.

I suppose people would see me as a career person but it's all been a bit knocked-into-it for one reason or another. I don't think, deep down, that I ever regarded myself as a career person and probably even now I would say that I'm not particularly ... But I think other people would perceive me as being very ambitious."

#### Gatekeepers to Promotion

The next factor that seemed to have been significant in the careers of these married women headteachers was the advice and encouragement of 'gatekeepers' (Lyons, 1981) in motivating them to seek promotion. These headteachers frequently mentioned the influence of inspectors and of their own headteachers in their careers as having given the initial push and in guiding the teachers into appropriate courses of action. Thus, the idea of going for promotion was put into Mrs. Tanner's mind by her headteacher at the time.

"I hadn't been back long when the head said to me: 'Are you going to stop here or are you going to think of promotion?' It wasn't until she said that that it ever entered my head."

Mrs. Collins explained how, following her return to teaching, she needed a push on to the promotions ladder.

"My career wasn't really planned. I didn't want

to be a head. I hadn't really thought about being a deputy. I think people said, you know inspectors came around and said: 'You've been here long enough. What about applying for some promotion? Come on.' I needed that before I did it."

Similarly, Mrs. Butler had needed an initial push and then constant reassurance and confirmation as she progressed up the career ladder:

"When the graded post came up, the head said I ought to be applying for it and I thought why not? I will have a go. I needed that encouragement to apply for promotion. Probably I have been very fortunate with people I have worked with who have given me backing and supported and encouraged me. When I was deputy head, the head I was working with, she continually boosted my confidence. She told you if she thought you stood a chance or not. She said yes I ought to apply for a headship. So I did and I got it."

Mrs. Ellis had sought the endorsement and confirmation of the inspectorate for her decision to move from junior to infant education. Mrs. Firth had been advised by the inspectorate to apply for promotion in a junior school as a way of moving out of secondary education. Mrs. Spencer had the backing and support of her head and the inspector in the unusual circumstances when she applied for her deputy headship. In Mrs. Grant's case the encouragement of others was even more significant. Mrs. Grant was convinced that she had been made career conscious and career ambitious early on in her teaching. She perceived that she had been pushed by heads and inspectors. She thought that her teaching skills and abilities had been noted, and praise and encouragement had been given. She claimed she was continually urged to seek promotion; advice was given and appropriate strategies of movement were recommended:

"I went to work at an infants school in (a city district)..... I did one term in that school and the headteacher said I ought to go for promotion. And I got promotion. I got a post of special responsibility in another infants school (in the same district) ... I stayed at that school for two years and two terms. The head urged me to apply for promotion; wanted me

to become her deputy head. I wouldn't because I didn't entirely agree with her philosophy. I applied outside that school. I was being pushed by educationalists, all the way along the line really, to go on. Not absolutely sure myself that I could do the job. Flattered, of course. But it was at a pace I didn't have time to sit back and think what am I doing?

(Two years, two terms later, I became a deputy head at an infant school in another city area). I was now a career teacher ... I enjoyed being a deputy head. I was creative in my teaching ... Then I found that the inspector had been alerted by the head to what was going on in my room. Then the next thing I knew, they'd invited every teacher in the city in groups, over a period of time, to come to my classroom, for a course in my classroom ... I suddenly found I'd made a name for myself in the city. Everybody knew who I was, which I hadn't chosen. But I was singled out. Then the inspector told an HMI who came to visit me. Next thing I knew I'm invited to help on a course at ..... University one summer and talk to headteachers and HMI's. Which I did. I think I was head-designate then. I got my headship in that September in a city infants school (age 29)."

There were clear elements of sponsorship in Mrs. Grant's career.

In considering her career, Mrs. Grant clearly perceived the encouragement of heads and the sponsorship of inspectors to have been important in motivating her and in guiding her along a career route. Later in her career, when she was an infant head, an inspector had advised her to wait before applying for a primary headship. Her own infant school and the junior school on the same site were clearly destined for amalgamation.

"Actually an inspector had given me a first indication that something was up when I told the inspector I was thinking of applying for primary headships. The inspector must have known that all this (amalgamation) was on the cards and obviously had me ear-marked for the job. I see now. The inspector told me to hold my horses for a little while: 'you've not been here that long dear'."

A year later a new primary school was formed out of the old junior and infant schools. The head of the junior school took early retirement and Mrs. Grant was appointed head of the primary school without an interview.



It is interesting to note that Mrs. Grant did not see herself as ambitious. She denied that she had been ambitious for promotion in her career. She felt that the ambition and drive came from others; those who urged and encouraged her to seek promotion. She thought that her biggest driving force was the desire to please and the fear of letting anybody down. She thought in her own case that that drive had been misinterpreted as ambition.

Of course, not all of these women headteachers attributed their career success to the initial encouragement of such 'gatekeepers'. Mrs. Williams and, in a different way, Mrs. Porter, were more obviously self-motivated. But nevertheless other heads had explained certain of their own career developments as being greatly influenced by their own headteachers at the time. Mrs. Edwards achieved all her promotions to deputy head within the one school:

"When I had been there for three years, I actually started to look at and apply for jobs in other schools. But the headteacher didn't want me to leave and she actually said the next vacancy that came up in the infants school, I could have. So, in a way my path was smoothed for me. Then the deputy head post came up shortly after that and she didn't actually encourage me to apply for it, but I did apply and I got it. So it wasn't an intentional thing to stay there, but it did suit me because she was so accommodating (as far as family responsibilities were concerned)."

Similarly Mrs. Gilbert had been promoted from scale one straight to deputy head and she saw this as being unusual.

"Anyway, I knew the school. I'd been to courses there and liked it and I just thought I would have a go. I got on well with the head; we suited each other."

Obviously within a local education authority area there would be informal links between heads, inspectors and teachers and this seemed to be an important feature of primary education. In so far as there was

little mobility of heads or of upwardly mobile teachers out of the area, this meant there was an important network of contacts which might be significant for the careers of individual teachers. These links might also be formed by attendance at in-service courses or Teachers Centres. Meetings of primary and infant heads was another forum for the dissemination of information about vacant posts and likely candidates.

### Career and Family Responsibilities

The final factor that was worthy of note in the careers of these women headteachers was the lack of any clearly defined career plan. These heads had not seen the headteacher position as their ultimate career goal and did not perceive their careers as steps taken towards that goal. Rather, they proceeded one step at a time. They saw that they could cope with the new post and with their family responsibilities. They began to recognise the limitations of the new post in terms of what they could and could not do. And then, and only then, did they begin to look around and contemplate taking the next step. But always their family responsibilities were of fundamental importance. They would take the next step only if their families could cope and in particular if their children would not be badly affected by the change. They felt that they would be the best judges of this. They would know if their families were being adversely effected and, if they felt this, then they would be prepared to reverse that career step. Mrs. Butler explained how cautious she was in her return to teaching and how she had reassured herself that such a step could be retraced if the family, in particular the children, could not cope.

"I went on the understanding that I would do a term and I would see how it went. I had a chat with (the inspector) and we agreed that was how it would be. I would agree to the term and if there should be any

hiccups then, obviously, I would finish. I would have to finish and she seemed quite agreeable to that. In fact, things worked out extremely well."

Mrs. Howard's career was also a good illustration of how career decisions were made and executed one step at a time. When her boys had started school and were occupied during the day, Mrs. Howard did a Dip. Ed. and then became a scale 3 Community Teacher. But she quickly became aware of the limitations of that position:

"(As a community teacher) there were frustrations of course because I was subject to the wishes of the headteacher. So there were limits to what I could do. I knew I would never have total control over the way school work was developed unless I acquired some authority within the school and one needed to do that by going through the stages. So when a deputy headship came up in a school where I knew the headteacher felt as I did, I applied for it and got it."

But family responsibilities remained of fundamental importance. Not until she was relieved, to an extent, of the worry of small children, could she contemplate taking on greater career responsibilities.

"The family came first. We needed the money. I was fortunate in that I was trained to do a job that I loved and it was compatible with having children. I didn't really get the fever about promotion or going anywhere until I had the freedom to do the job that I wanted to do as a community teacher and realized how many ideas I was getting from it about how schools ought to be. That was when I thought I could do it and I'll go forward."

It is also important to recognise that these women had prepared themselves for failure, for rejection, when they applied for a promotion post. It is often suggested that women do not put themselves forward for promotion and that this is the main explanation of the few women in promoted posts. However, these women had put themselves forward and they had been successful. But they had been prepared for rejection. A number of heads had commented that when they first applied for promotion posts, they would not have minded too much if their applications had not been

successful. After all, many of them perceived, they had the best of both worlds. They had interesting and absorbing work and they had their families. So if the promotion had not come, they would not have felt too badly about it. Thus these women were succeeding in a critical balancing act. They were coping both with their careers and with family responsibilities. It was perhaps important to such women that lack of total success in one could have been compensated for by elements of perceived success in the other.

### Conclusions

So, what generalisations can be made about the careers of these women primary headteachers from their own perceptions of when they became career conscious and how they had begun to achieve their headteacher positions?

Several of the heads had remarked that the county was a "good" authority to work for both in the sense of educational provision of books and equipment for children and in the sense of promotional opportunities for teachers. Obviously this had been the case for these heads in that they had all made their careers within county schools. Indeed, most of the heads had achieved their promotions within only one area of the county. So it seemed that stability within one county and even within one area of the county was important for the careers of these heads. Even where teachers had been geographically mobile early in their careers (Williams, Howard and Spencer), their promotion did not begin until they had acquired stability and were able to become established in the area. It is probable, therefore, that primary headships and even more likely that infant headships are achieved within local educational areas and through a small circuit of schools. Primary and infant headships are less

likely to be achieved initially across county areas and even more remote is the possibility of a first primary and infant headship being achieved in a different county.

Another factor of importance is that for the women who had taken time out of teaching to care for their own families, they did not begin to think about their careers until they had returned to full-time teaching after having their children and after their children were established at school. Not all the heads had taken time off teaching but of those that had, none were ambitious before they had completed their own families. Only Mrs. Firth, among the heads who had broken their careers, had achieved a deputy head position prior to taking time off. And Mrs. Firth denied that this was career ambition on her part. She claimed it was necessitated by her desire to move from secondary to primary education at a time when such moves were not encouraged. Indeed, Mrs. Edwards claimed that she would recommend to women teachers that they should have their children as early as possible and then get back to their careers, as she had done herself, although by accident rather than by design. She would not recommend that women teachers postpone having their families until they had achieved a high scale position. This was because women might have to return to a scale one post regardless of their position before they left, particularly if they wished to return via part-time or supply teaching.

Also, family commitments and responsibilities do not diminish when these women return to teaching. These women heads regarded themselves as having the major responsibility for their schools and their work, for their own children (where they have them), for their homes and even for their husbands. In several cases these women had responsibilities in varying degrees for their own parents and parents-in-law in addition to

their immediate families. So family responsibilities were not minimised or even shared (for the most part) by these women heads. They had to continue to meet family and work commitments, balancing one against the other, for the whole of their working lives. Mrs. Ellis talked of the feelings of responsibility for children continuing into their teenage years (with options choices and examination decisions, college and career choices) and even beyond. Mrs. Gilbert, Mrs. Butler and Mrs. Tanner had explained their continuing responsibilities for parents and parents-in-law. So the career planning and career decisions of these women have to be made with family very much in mind. The job of teaching offered many advantages in this respect. At least the chances of holidays coinciding with children's vacations were high even if the hours were not completely convenient since travel to and from the teacher's school meant they could not always be at home for their own children's returns.

It is understandable, therefore, that none of these heads could claim to have worked to a career plan. Their progress was much more haphazard and intermittent. Their careers developed one step at a time. Then they saw how the job change had affected the family, assessed their own ability to cope and, having been reassured in these respects, they decided to try for the next stage. At the same time, they were reconciled if they didn't succeed in achieving the next step, particularly in the early stages. They felt they had so much already that they had convinced themselves they would not mind too much if the next step was not achieved. Also, several heads had attributed at least part of their career success to chance or luck factors such as 'being in the right place at the right time', rather than through deliberate planning or manoeuvring on their own parts.

Finally, the importance of headteachers and inspectors, as



'gatekeepers' (Lyons, 1981) in motivating and encouraging women teachers to seek promotion, needs to be emphasized. Most of these heads claimed to have needed an initial push, by their own heads at the time, on to the promotions ladder. Now, giving encouragement to apply for promotion is clearly different from having the power actually to allocate promotion posts. But heads can and do apply for scale promotions for individual teachers (although the advertising, application and selection procedures for deputy head and headteacher positions are rather more formalized). This means that teachers who are sponsored for such internal promotions begin to climb the promotions ladder whereas others have to wait or have to motivate themselves. There was evidence, then, of sponsorship of some of these women in their careers and obviously for this group the system had worked well - they had all gained headships. But, clearly, the promotions system is open to abuse. Some teachers are not sponsored by such a method and this is, perhaps, the major reason why some teachers feel that the promotion system is unfair (Lyons, 1981; Sikes, 1984). In addition, heads and inspectors are likely to encourage those teachers whose pedagogy and aims seem to fit with their own and teachers who are desirous of promotion could have to bear this in mind and adjust their approaches accordingly. This could result in a uniformity, a sameness of approach among those in high positions in primary education and consequently a 'cooling-out' of those who do not fit and who, therefore, are not encouraged. Obviously such methods of promotion are not unique to teaching. Also, there might be more room for abuse in secondary education where there are more posts of special responsibility to be allocated. Teachers unions have made certain recommendations as to how such abuses might be avoided, (NAS, 1979; NUT, 1981). But the alternative to such modes of sponsorship and encouragement might be a reduction in the numbers

of women applying for such posts.

So, geographical stability and the encouragement of significant authority figures such as heads and inspectors were important in the careers of these women primary and infant heads. For those who had taken time out of teaching to care for their own young families, their career intentions did not begin to clarify until they had returned to teaching full-time. But for these women heads, their careers had unfolded one step at a time and career plans had had to be reconciled with family responsibilities. The idea of working towards a long term career goal, centred solely on achieving promotion at work did not in any way match the experiences of these women headteachers.

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The 'broken career' of the woman teacher is a well-known phenomenon. The career pattern for married women teachers. The 12-15 years of absence from work. Women teachers break their teaching service for short or longer periods of time in order to have and to care for their own young children. This is an important work strategy for women which enables them to fulfil their aims and expectations to have and to care for their own children and yet not permanently give up their teaching work. (1) Other researchers have indicated, by statistical analysis, the significance of the break in service for the careers of women teachers. The research of Gifford and Flude (1973), based on two large postal surveys of women returners and

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generalisations about the characteristics of women teachers who break their teaching service. The National Union of Teachers produced a report, together with the Equal Opportunities Commission, which analysed the effects of a break in service on the scale positions and promotion prospects of a sample of NUT women teachers. (NUT, 1980). Also, Turnbull and Williams (1974) in a detailed statistical analysis, have considered to what extent a break in service can account for the imbalance of earnings between men and women teachers. (also, see Everts, 1986).

However, some of the married women teachers who take time out of primary teaching also gain promotion and are successful in achieving headteacher posts. I have been studying such a group of women primary and infant headteachers. I was interested in the ways in which women who achieve primary headteacher positions had managed to combine family and teaching commitments; what strategies had been devised; at what stage and for how long had they broken their service and how had they come to return

RETURNING TO TEACHING: THE CAREER BREAKS AND RETURNS OF MARRIED WOMEN

PRIMARY HEADTEACHERS

The 'broken career' is the term used to describe the most common career pattern for married women teachers. The large majority of married women teachers break their teaching service for short or longer periods of time in order to have and to care for their own young children. This is an important work strategy for women which enables them to fulfil their aims and expectations to have and to care for their own children and yet not permanently give up their teaching work.(1) Other researchers have indicated, by statistical analysis, the significance of the break in service for the careers of women teachers. The research of Ollerenshaw and Flude (1973), based on two large postal surveys of women returners and would-be returners both primary and secondary, produced a number of generalisations about the characteristics of women teachers who break their teaching service. The National Union of Teachers produced a report, together with the Equal Opportunities Commission, which analysed the effects of a break in service on the scale positions and promotion prospects of a sample of NUT women members, (NUT, 1980). Also, Turnbull and Williams (1974) in a detailed statistical analysis, have considered to what extent a break in service can account for the imbalance of earnings between men and women teachers, (also, see Evetts, 1986).

However, some of the married women teachers who take time out of primary teaching also gain promotion and are successful in achieving headteacher posts. I have been studying such a group of women primary and infant headteachers. I was interested in the ways in which women who achieve primary headteacher positions had managed to combine family and teaching commitments: what strategies had been devised; at what stage and for how long had they broken their service and how had they come to return



to teaching. I have been conducting life history interviews with a sample of twenty-five 'once married' women who were headteachers of primary and infant schools from two educational areas of a midlands county.(2)

Fifteen of this sample had broken their teaching service and had subsequently returned to teaching. This article is based on information from these fifteen returners. Of the other ten headteachers, one had been a late entrant to teaching, eight had had no children and one had continued to teach without a break. These ten were excluded from this analysis since they had not broken their teaching service.

Women who are primary and infant headteachers are an appropriate occupational group through which to study the effect and interrelationship of family and career for women. Firstly, primary and infant teaching is usually regarded as 'a career' and it is one in which large numbers of women are actively engaged. In fact, women outnumber men: according to national statistics (DES, 1985), 78% of teachers in maintained primary schools in England and Wales are women. Secondly, women returners constitute a substantial proportion of the teaching service. The NUT survey estimated that approximately 65-70% of the female teaching population (primary and secondary) eventually break their service. The report goes on to assert that "when grossed up, this figure represents about one third of the entire teaching force - a sufficiently large group for note to be taken of their needs and interests" (NUT, 1980, p. 45).

Thirdly, primary and infant teaching is work in which women can and do achieve promotion: 45% of primary headteachers are women. The achievement of a primary or an infant headship is a modest achievement, however. These headships are much less rewarding in financial and status terms than the headships of secondary schools where the proportion of women heads is considerably less, (only 16% of secondary headteachers are women).



In considering the work and family strategies of women who have broken their teaching service and who have achieved primary headteacher positions, it is not intended to imply that these women are the only 'successful' ones. Clearly the notion of 'success' is subjective (Woods, 1983). Married women teachers with their own children might be content to remain on the lower teaching scales and might be unwilling to take on the additional responsibilities that go with higher scaled posts. Hilsum and Start (1972) suggested that there was a "strikingly low promotion orientation" among women teachers in general and they have been heavily criticised for this suggestion (NUT, 1980). Silverstone (1980, p.44) has added "it could even be the case that the profession is secretly pleased to have a body of workers whose aspirations are not high and who thus ease the pressure on career posts within the profession. The danger lies in assuming that all women will fulfil this role. They patently do not." However, for some women teachers, a strategy whereby promotion achievements remain modest, would constitute a successful resolution of the conflicting demands of family and work on the woman's time and energy. However, the women in this study had achieved promotion; they were all primary or infant head teachers. In addition, at some stage in their teaching, they had broken their service in order to care for their own young families. It is interesting to consider, therefore, how these women's work and family goals had been managed; the strategies that had been deployed which enabled them to achieve both objectives. The idea of a teaching 'career' provided a starting point. Shirley Dex (1985) has examined the development of the concept of 'career' in industrial sociology. She has shown how the early descriptive interpretations of the term, as equivalent to work histories, could have been used to describe the work experiences of women as well as men. But she claimed that later refinements resulted in the inclusion of

developmental or promotional elements which came to be attached to the concept. Thus Dex (1985, p. 81) quotes Slocum's (1966, p. 5) definition:

"an occupational career may be defined for this discussion as an ordered sequence of development extending over a period of years and involving progressively more responsible roles within an occupation."

It was this inclusion of the notions of "ordered sequence of development" into "progressively more responsible roles" that resulted for many years in the neglect of women's careers as an area of empirical investigation. The concept of 'career' was inappropriate for the study of women's working lives since most women did not follow such an ordered sequence of development and only a few women ever achieved promotion into significantly more responsible roles. As a result, some researchers have totally rejected the concept for women: 'career' was dismissed as being a male concept with no application to women's work. Thus, Dex (1984a, 1984b) substitutes the term 'profile' to avoid the male-centred connotation which attaches to 'career'. Other researchers have tried to use the term as part of an explanation of why women did not achieve promotion to the same extent as men: hence, the idea of the 'broken' or the 'interrupted career'.

Such an explanation develops in the following way: women and men begin their (teaching) careers at the same stage and with identical sets of qualifications and ambitions. The large majority of men and women teachers will marry at some point. Marriage increases the ambitions of men teachers to seek promotion and to develop their careers since the men now assume the main breadwinner and head of household responsibilities. Thus men teachers achieve promotion up to the highest position they can within the hierarchical structure of posts that constitutes the teaching profession. Married women teachers are less ambitious to develop their own careers since they frequently have to move because of their husbands

job changes and because they are beginning to contemplate, or may actually be experiencing, parenthood. Then, at some stage, a large proportion of married women teachers will break their teaching service. They leave the profession in order to have and to care for their own families. Hence their teaching 'careers' are interrupted. Finally, these women eventually return to teaching. But the break of service will have had a dramatic impact on the teaching career. The woman might decide not to seek promotion, not to add to her teaching responsibilities because her family commitments are still heavy. Alternatively, the woman might attempt to revive or renew her career commitment, might seek promotion, but because of the break in service, she experiences difficulty in achieving promotion and developing her career.

However, some women teachers do manage to combine family and teaching responsibilities and also achieve promotion in their work. The women primary and infant heads in this study had broken their teaching service and they had achieved promotion in their teaching careers in that they had achieved headteacher posts. Did these women experience their periods of time at home caring for young children as a 'break' or as an 'interruption' in their teaching careers? Was the break totally negative in the consequences and effects which it had on these women's subsequent career experiences? Obviously the idea of a break in teaching service includes many different types and is probably infinitely variable. Some women have only one, relatively short break and then return to teaching full-time. Other women have several breaks, their returns are usually intermittent and short, probably by supply or by part-time teaching and this variable pattern of service continues for a long period of time. I am interested in how far the length, the timing, and the type of the break can be used to explain the subsequent attitudes of women teachers to their careers. ~~for established nurseries for, or gave priority in existing~~

For women teachers who have experienced such a break in service, the return to teaching is a significant event both in terms of family relationships and arrangements and in terms of how the women view their work and the careers that are being re-entered. The return to work or career after a period at home as full-time housewives and mothers has been termed "a critical status transition" by the Rapoport (1971) and in Fogarty (1971). So, the manner of the return, how the return came about, is interesting in itself and might be significant in helping to explain the subsequent career commitments of women teachers.

In the examples and quotations that are given below, pseudonyms have been used throughout, in order to disguise the headteachers' identities.

#### Economic and Political Climate

First it is necessary to emphasize the importance of external, economic and political factors (Ball and Goodson, 1985; Sikes et al, 1985). Most of these women were returning to teaching in the 1960s. The economic and political climate of that time was very different to that of today. It was a time of political optimism and economic expansion from which the education system benefitted directly. New schools were being built, new educational ideas were welcomed. The educational system was being expanded. In addition, the post-war increase in the birthrate was maintained until the 1960s. The school-age population was still increasing; schools were full and, in spite of emergency training of teachers after the war, there was a shortage of teachers particularly in the primary and infant sectors, the sectors where traditionally women teachers have outnumbered men. So women primary teachers and particularly infant teachers were in short supply. Married women teachers were encouraged to return to the classrooms. Many local educational authorities established nurseries for, or gave priority in existing

nurseries to, the young children of married women teachers in an attempt to get such women to return to staff the increasing and expanding schools. The women heads in this study were very much aware of the contrast between the situation when they returned compared with the greatly reduced demand for the returning teacher today. Mrs. Ellis, an infant head, explained the difference in the following way:

"One of the joys (of teaching) at that time was that you could happily leave in the knowledge that you could return when and how you wished. I mean I've often wondered what I would have done if things had been different. I've spoken to young (women) teachers who are terribly torn between pursuing their careers and taking time off to have their own families."

The dilemmas of having to cope with both family commitments and teaching responsibilities were eased for these women since every help was given them to enable them to fit their responsibilities for their own young children in with their teaching responsibilities. They could leave their schools in time to meet their own children; they could take their young pre-school children into school with them; pre-school children could be admitted to the new and expanding nursery units that were being added on to existing primary and infant schools; their children could be admitted early into infant schools. The education authority had opened a nursery specifically for teachers children. So, in a time of severe teacher shortage, particularly of infant teachers, ways were found of helping women who wanted to return to teaching to cope with their family responsibilities. The women in this study were very aware that this shortage of teachers in the 1960s was one of the main factors in their decisions to return to teaching. It seemed that most of these heads had returned earlier than they had originally intended: "You see, it was very different then because there were not enough people for the number of jobs that



were going. I mean I never intended to go back when (my son) was eighteen months old ... But they sort of urged you to go back and made it so that you really felt well you couldn't refuse."

(Mrs. Northfield).

"I actually had somebody knock at the door and say, 'I understand you are a qualified teacher. You are interested in slower learning and we are desperate. Would you consider coming?' I don't think I would have left my children if I hadn't had a chance like that."

(Mrs. Pointer).

The acute shortage of infant teachers had also influenced certain of these women to move to infant schools from other sectors. Mrs. Firth moved to infant teaching (from junior) on her return.

"I went back to teaching in 1963. At that time, there was a tremendous shortage of teachers and I used to get telephone calls asking me if I would go and do some supply work. I did some supply work in an infant school. Infant schools were packed out and it was infant teachers they wanted more than anything at that time. I was invited straight back as soon as I could come back."

Other heads had commented on how easy it was to find a teaching job. Several of these headteachers, as young teachers, had moved around the country early in their careers because of their husbands' work. But they were able to get teaching jobs wherever they went. Usually they could choose schools according to their own priorities. These women were in a strong bargaining position. They could even choose the schools they wanted to return to and negotiate over their child care arrangements.

"I went to see the Area Education Officer and I said I would come back part-time if he would like me to. And, of course, teachers were short in those days and he jumped at it. (Then, when I heard about the new school) I went in and said, 'Look, I'll go full-time if you let me go to this new school that's opening here'. And he jumped at that. So, I was lucky, really."

(Mrs. Dutton).

"I said I was only interested if my son could get in the nursery. So the Area Education Officer approached the head and the head said, 'I'm sorry the nursery is full'. So I said, 'Well that's no



good to me then because I would want my little boy to be in the nursery'. Well, ... he said he was going to keep in touch. But I'd only arrived home when the phone rang and they said they'd fitted him in the nursery if I would come back to school. So I said that I would take the job."

(Mrs. Holden).

These headteachers were well aware how much the situation had changed for teachers today. Mrs. Butler summed up the main difference for her and considered the effect of this for the promotion of teachers today:

"I think teachers are much more static now than they were formally. There doesn't seem to be the opportunity, quite so much, for promotion. I feel people obtain scaled posts and then they stick longer. There seemed to be a lot more movement when I was younger."

After a year of part-time supply work, Mrs. Tanner returned to full-time. She had no more children. Similarly, Mrs. Porter had had only one child and returned to full-time teaching. She had had two children but because her husband seemed unable to keep a job, she had to return out of financial necessity. He left her a year later. Mrs. Porter was not in a strong bargaining position. She would have preferred a part-time job at this time but the job she was offered was full-time and in a primary school in a rural area in the north of the county where she was living at the time.

Length of the Break

The NUT survey (1980) indicated that, of those women teachers who had no choice, she took the job and returned to teaching; her elder child was eighteen months and her younger six months. The longest periods out of teaching of heads in this group were taken by Mrs. Dutton (eight years out of full-time teaching), Mrs. Edwards (five years out of full-time teaching) and Mrs. Collins (six years out of full-time teaching). Mrs. Dutton did some part-time teaching but neither Mrs. Collins nor Mrs. Edwards did any supply or part-time work while they were at home looking after their own children. (Mrs. Dutton had five children; Mrs. Collins and Mrs. Edwards both had five children). However, were, for the most part, very short. In addition, there were certain

For the headteachers in this research, there were some similarities in the lengths of the career breaks that these women had experienced. For these women who subsequently became heads, their periods out of teaching were, for the most part, very short. In addition, there were certain both Mrs. Collins and Mrs. Edwards had worked at pre-school playgroups

common features in that their breaks had not been complete; most had worked part-time or done supply teaching even when their own children were very young. Out of this sample of headteachers, Mrs. Porter and Mrs. Tanner had had the shortest periods out of teaching. Mrs. Tanner was out of full-time teaching for eighteen months to care for her baby son. But, after only six months, she returned to part-time, supply teaching for two or three days a week, leaving her son with her mother.

"The reason I went back, apart from it being nice to earn some money, was that they had been calling me out to help almost from the first September after he was born. Teachers were in very short supply."

After a year of part-time supply work, Mrs. Tanner returned full-time. She had no more children. Similarly, Mrs. Porter had had only eighteen months out of full-time teaching. She had had two children but because her husband seemed unable to keep a job, she had to return out of financial necessity. He left her a year later. Mrs. Porter was not in a strong bargaining position. She would have preferred a part-time job at this time but the job she was offered was full-time and in a primary school in a rural area in the north of the county where she was living at the time. She had been trained for secondary teaching, but she felt she had no choice. She took the job and returned to teaching; her elder child was eighteen months and her younger six months.

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while they were out of teaching. Mrs. Collins had helped to start and to run the first pre-school playgroup in her area. Then she returned straight into full-time teaching in an infants school. Similarly Mrs. Edwards had helped to run a playgroup until she returned to full-time infant teaching.

The other heads in this sample had had periods of time out of full-time teaching varying from eighteen months to eight years. Mrs. Ellis had had four years out of full-time teaching during which time she had done some supply work. When she returned, she taught part-time for a term until, with her youngest child in the nursery of the school where she taught, she felt she could return full-time. Mrs. Spencer had five years out of full-time teaching. She had done supply teaching in between having her first and second children and she returned full-time when her younger child was three. Mrs. Howard returned to full-time teaching when her first son was nine months old in order to help her husband pursue his career. She took a further two years out of teaching to have and to care for her second son. Then she returned to part-time teaching for four years until she felt ready for a full-time teaching commitment. Mrs. Firth had approximately one year out of teaching for her first child. Then she did part-time supply work until the birth of her second child. After another year off with her second child, she again returned to part-time supply work until her second child started school. Then she returned to full-time teaching.

The different lengths of time that these teachers took out of teaching and their returns either to full-time or via part-time and supply work indicate the variation (and complexity) in the breaks of service of these women and in the manner of their returns. But the similarities in their experiences are also significant. The large majority of these women were not out of teaching for very long periods. Generally, they kept in

touch either through supply work and/or through part-time teaching and where this did not happen, they had teaching-related experience (playgroup work) which could ease their return. One of the consequences of their breaks only being partial and short was that these women did not feel any anxiety about their returns to teaching. In their short periods of time out of teaching they did not feel any unease about their abilities to cope again in the classroom. The women teachers who do experience such feelings of self doubt are presumably those teachers who have been out of teaching for longer periods and who have not continually re-boosted their self-confidence in their abilities to teach, as these women had, through part-time or supply work. Ollerenshaw (1974), when considering the needs and desires of would-be returners for refresher and retraining courses, had concluded that professional confidence decreased in direct proportion to the length of the absence from the classroom. The lack of anxiety about the return in this group of women teachers might also be explained by the fact that, as primary and infant teachers, their work was unlikely to be as stressful as the work of secondary teachers. Obviously this applies particularly to the infant teachers, where their work as mothers had seemingly reinforced their feelings of competence in their abilities to cope with young children and in many cases had increased their understanding of the educational needs of the young. Both Mrs. Ellis and Mrs. Howard spoke very positively of their periods of time at home as full-time mothers and of how they returned with an increased understanding of, and new ideas about how to teach, young children.

#### Timing the Break

Another similar feature in the breaks of service of this group of headteachers was the stage or the timing of the break. Out of this group of fifteen headteachers, only one had achieved promotion prior to taking

the break in order to have and to care for her own young children. For the other heads, promotion in their careers had had to wait until they had completed their families and had returned to teaching. It is interesting to note that for this group of returners, their ambitions to develop their own careers and to achieve promotion did not crystalise as aims or goals until their own young children were settled at school and they could return to a full-time teaching commitment (Evetts, 1987).

Only Mrs. Firth, of the headteachers who had had a teaching break, had achieved a deputy head position prior to taking time off to have her own children. But even Mrs. Firth denied that she was career ambitious at this stage. She explained that she had achieved her deputy head position as a result of her wish to move from secondary to primary education. She was advised that the best way of getting out of a secondary school and into primary education would be to apply for promotion in a junior school and that was how and why she achieved her deputy head position the first time. However, when she returned to teaching, after her break, she had to return to a scale one post and that 'demotion' had annoyed and motivated her to regain her former status. Five years after she returned full-time she became a head. and a 'threshold position' within an occupation which, once achieved. So of these fifteen headteachers who had broken their teaching service to have their own families, none was ambitious to develop her own career until after the completion of family goals and the return to teaching. Indeed, Mrs. Edwards claimed that she would recommend to women teachers who wanted to achieve promotion and to develop their teaching careers that they should have their children as early as possible and then get back to teaching, as she had done herself, although by accident rather than by intention. She would not recommend that women teachers postpone having their families until they had achieved a high scale position. This was because women might have to return to a scale one post regardless of



their position before they left, particularly if they wished to return via part-time or supply teaching.

In view of this, it is interesting to speculate about the feasibility of a two-stage career strategy for women who are desirous of promotion in the teaching profession. To what extent can women aim for promotion in two stages, climbing the lower scales before and the higher scales after taking a career break? It seems that in primary education, if the woman achieves only a modest degree of scale promotion before taking a break, then after her return she is likely to have to return to a scale one position and climb the promotion ladder a second time. But, to what extent does the headteacher position constitute a threshold, in this respect? Could a woman who was a headteacher before taking a break, realistically expect to compete for a headteacher post on her return? None of the headteachers in this group of returners had pursued such a career strategy although four of the heads without children of their own, in the main sample, were still young enough to contemplate breaking their service in order to have children. This might be a newly emerging career strategy, therefore. Also it is probable that these notions of a 'two-stage career' and a 'threshold position' within an occupation which, once achieved, could be regained on the return after a break in service, could be applied to women's careers in the professions, more generally.

However, for those women heads who had broken their teaching service before becoming career ambitious, it seemed that the timing of the break, the relatively short periods of time out of teaching and the incomplete nature of the breaks, together with the severe shortage of and high demand for such teachers at that time, were probably significant factors in explaining the ease of the returns of these teachers and might also be significant as factors that contributed to their subsequent successes in promotion terms.



### The Return

It is also important to consider the manner of the return, the ways in which the process of returning was initiated and eventually brought about. In analysing the data from the interviews, it soon became apparent that an informal network of personal contacts, of friends, former colleagues, heads and inspectors had been influential in putting in motion and in eventually bringing about the returns of these women teachers.

Mrs. Tanner explained her return in the following way:

"Teachers were in short supply and I kept getting messages from my friends who by that time were perhaps deputies, and people I had been friendly with at the school. First it was my friend who rang me - they'd got three staff off and could I possibly go and help."

For Mrs. Ellis it was a former college associate who set the process of returning in motion and who was perhaps significant also in the first steps up the promotion ladder.

"It's quite interesting because I was shopping when I met a girl who had been in the year above me at college. By that time she had just been appointed as the head of an infant school and she said, 'Oh, do you want to come back? We need good teachers'. So I said 'Well I was thinking about coming back to infant teaching'. So she said 'Go in and see the inspector'. So I went in with the kids and said 'Look I'd like to come back but I can't conceive a full-time job at the moment. I don't think I can cope with that'. So the inspector said 'Well, how would you like to do it?' So I did three days at first and the children were looked after by a neighbour while I did the three days. But I soon got into the state where I couldn't stand the fact that somebody else had the class for two days and disrupting things I'd been doing. I soon got into full-time again and the children were in the nursery. It so happened that they put me into the school where this person was the head. And then, eighteen months later, I got the deputy headship in that school."

Mrs. Collins had not intended to return to teaching until her

younger child was established at school. But, again, a chance meeting with a teacher that she knew, necessitated an immediate change of plan.

"I was stopped by a teacher I knew who said 'Can you come and help us out at the local school, down at the bottom of the hill? We're short of teachers'. And I said, 'Er ... I hadn't considered going back yet'. She said, 'Well perhaps part-time.' So I said, 'Well I do a lot of work with the playgroup. It would be similar hours. But I wouldn't want to leave (my son)'. 'Well, talk to the head. I'm sure you could bring him with you'. Well I had always said I wouldn't have a child of mine in a school where I taught. But it all happened so quickly, I didn't really have time to think. The head said 'It's a full-time teacher I want not a part-time and yes you can bring your son'. This was just before the Easter holidays and she wanted it for the summer term. So I had a day to think about it and I said yes."

In describing her second return to teaching, after her second child, Mrs. Howard claimed that:

"Someone phoned me up and said that they were desperate for somebody to come and do a few mornings remedial reading. It was a deputy head that phoned me, a friend. We'd worked together briefly and our husbands knew each other."

Mrs. Spencer was living in Scotland at the time of her return. She was not known in the local teaching network, therefore, but her husband had let his work colleagues know that his wife was a teacher. This resulted in the initial contact. Again, Mrs. Spencer's original plan had to be changed and a quick decision made.

"I hadn't planned to go back to teaching until my daughter was five. But she was three in fact when I went back. I had a phone call one evening from the wife of a friend of my husband who said could I possibly go and help out at one of the local schools because two of the staff had had a bad car accident going to school. One teacher was seriously injured and was likely to be off for a long time. So with two teachers off they were short of supply staff. They wondered if I could possibly go along and help out. I said I could only go if I could bring my daughter with me. It was an infant class. She was three and could fit in with what was happening. She was

actually a little nuisance. But I went along and the staff were very kind and supportive. The headmaster was delightful."

In fact, for most of the heads in this sample, the phone call or the chance meeting with a former colleague or teacher friend were instrumental in the initial decision to return. In the expansionist days of the 1960's, schools to return to, could almost be chosen for their easy accessibility, because they had a nursery or because it was the school the teacher had been at previously. In this way, the informal network of contacts was maintained and established through the highly practical function of getting women back into primary and infant teaching and indeed in helping them cope with their family responsibilities (article in preparation).

Mrs. Edward's return was slightly different. The initial contact was similarly informal and by chance but this time the process was initiated through the inspector for primary education. Mrs. Edward's husband had a meeting with the inspector in connection with his own work at the time. The education system was expanding. There was a shortage

"He mentioned that I was thinking of going back to teaching which was, in fact, only a vague thought in my mind. The inspector said if I was interested to give them a ring. I mean life was so different in those days, give them a ring and they'd see what they could do for me. In fact, the inspector rang me up and asked if I would go and see them. I said if I got a job I'd need somewhere that had a nursery place and I actually went back to ---- which was the school I'd been at previously. A new school had been opened in the five years I'd been away but there was some continuity because the head was the same; she knew me."

So, for these women who had taken time out of teaching to care for their own families and who, after their return, eventually became

Probably because of the widespread availability of such roles of headteachers of primary and infant schools, an informal network of assistance, these women were not out of teaching for long periods. The personal contacts, of friends, former colleagues, heads and inspectors had periods out of full-time teaching for this group of women headteachers

been important in putting in motion and in eventually bringing about the returns of these women to teaching. In fact, only one headteacher in this group had not returned in this way. Only Mrs. Porter had herself sought to return to teaching because of the difficult family and financial circumstances she was experiencing at the time. Mrs. Porter was not a part of this local primary teacher network; she had been a secondary school teacher.

### Discussion

In general, then, what were the significant features in the length and type of the breaks in teaching service of these women and in the way they returned to teaching which might explain the lack of perceived difficulties in their subsequent career experiences and might, at the same time, go some way towards contributing to an explanation of their subsequent achievements in career terms? Of most significance, perhaps, was the optimistic economic and political climate in which these women were returning. The education system was expanding. There was a shortage of teachers particularly in the infant sector where women teachers have always well-outnumbered men. Women were being urged to make suitable arrangements for their own young children and every encouragement was given them to return to the classroom. Numerous methods of assistance were devised, such as giving the young children of women teachers priority in the allocation of places in local authority nurseries or in the nurseries attached to infant schools, or simply disregarding the late arrival and the early leaving of women teachers during the school day to enable them to deliver and collect their own young children.

Probably because of the widespread availability of such modes of assistance, these women were not out of teaching for long periods. The periods out of full-time teaching for this group of women headteachers

ranged from eighteen months to eight years. But if part-time and supply teaching is calculated as the equivalent of half a year's service, then the large majority of this group were out of teaching for less than three years. So the lengths of their breaks in service were short and their breaks were seldom complete. Most of these women had kept in touch with teaching either through intermittent supply work or through more regular part-time teaching, or at the very least, through experience of setting up and assisting with play groups. One important consequence of this kind of incomplete break was that these women were not anxious about the teaching aspects of their return. They had no doubts about their abilities to do the teaching job. The anxieties they did have centred on their abilities to do two jobs: to cope with both teaching and with their family responsibilities. These heads had had to be reassured about this before they began to contemplate climbing the promotional ladder. And if they had felt they were not coping, it was clear that their teaching plans and intentions would have been postponed. Mrs. Butler expressed the caution felt by these women on her return to teaching:

"I went on the understanding that I would do a term and I would see how it went. I had a chat with (the inspector) and we agreed that was how it would be. I would agree to the term and if there should be any hiccups then, obviously, I would finish. I would have to finish and (the inspector) seemed quite agreeable to that. In fact, things worked out extremely well."

It was significant also, that for the most part, these women headteachers had taken their breaks before they had begun to climb the promotion ladder. None, in this group of returners, claimed to have had career ambitions to achieve a headteacher post, prior to taking time out of teaching to care for their own young children. These heads were giving retrospective accounts and the possibility must be kept in mind that these women had redefined or rationalised their views of themselves in the light of their returns. The perceptions of these women about their returns did seem to indicate the importance



of subsequent life events. But, in their retrospective perceptions, it was only after their returns to teaching that ambitions to achieve promotion began to take form and then steps were taken, one at a time, to pursue career goals.

Of course the timing, the shortness of the break and the fact that it was incomplete cannot by itself explain the subsequent career achievements of these women headteachers. The woman teacher can choose to continue with supply or part-time teaching for many years and even for the rest of her teaching career (although this strategy is becoming increasingly difficult because part-time teaching posts have been severely cut back). Similarly, the woman teacher, after returning full-time can decide not to seek promotion and not to take on additional teaching responsibilities. This balancing strategy whereby career is the negotiable component, is adopted by many women teachers as a means of enabling them to cope with both family and teaching responsibilities. However the short and incomplete nature of the breaks of these headteachers did mean that these heads never lost touch either with their teaching work or with the informal network of contacts with the help of which some teachers careers might be constructed. The shorter the break and the quicker the woman comes to realize that she can cope with all her various responsibilities, then the more likely she is to seek promotion for herself. It is also the case, as these heads acknowledged, that when women see other women colleagues go for promotion and succeed, that they will be motivated to try for themselves.

The other significant factor in the return to teaching of these teachers who became heads was the informal contacts who had suggested the return and urged the teacher to take the first steps. These women had been sought out and their returns had been encouraged. The perceptions of these women heads about their returns did seem to indicate the importance



of an informal occupational network of personal contacts. The most frequently mentioned contact in this teaching network was between an out-of-service woman teacher and her former head or deputy headteacher. It seemed that teacher friends and colleagues were also important, as was the other authority figure in the network, the primary inspector.

In a time of acute teacher shortage, the existence of such an occupational network did ensure that women teachers returned to teaching, and to full-time teaching, more quickly than they might have done otherwise. The existence of such a network might also be important in influencing the women's decisions, on their return, to look for promotion (see Evetts 1987). Insofar as the network kept the women in contact with teaching, this also meant that the women did not lose their contacts with headteachers, inspectors and other authority figures who might subsequently be influential in the development of their careers.

These women headteachers confirmed the importance of such an informal network when they explained how they themselves went about filling temporarily vacant positions in their own schools, when teachers were absent. The supply lists of primary teachers kept by the local educational authority were rarely called on. These headteachers preferred to find their own replacements and to find women that they already knew. These heads claimed that the education authority preferred them to find someone for themselves.

"Well, they do have a supply list in the Area Office but they have tended to say, 'Do you know of anyone you can call in?' And I do. Well, they are people we've known in the village. Ones we've used before. We've got to know them and they say, 'We would like to come again'. And they've come again. We do tend to have the same people over and over again. You get to know them, you see. You know the ones you want and the ones you don't want."  
(Mrs. Holden).

"I've got my own supply list, yes. All headteachers have, haven't they?"  
(Mrs. Dutton).

So heads had their own lists of out-of-service women teachers in their areas, women who were able and willing to fill-in for an absent teacher, to do a few days supply work and to help out, sometimes for longer periods, when teachers were absent. Their lists included former women teachers at the school, teacher-mothers of children currently in the school, friends or acquaintances of current teaching staff, wives of male colleagues, and so on. If these contacts failed to come up with a woman teacher who was readily available, then a head would contact another head to see if her list could provide a replacement. Thus, in the close-knit community of the primary and infant staffroom, heads preferred to bring in replacements that they knew rather than a stranger whose name had been obtained from a local authority supply list.

Finally, how appropriate is it to describe these women primary headteachers as having experienced broken or interrupted careers? The idea of a career centred solely on paid work and involving an "ordered sequence of development" and progress up through a clearly defined and hierarchically organized system of positions with increasing responsibilities is hardly appropriate to describe even the work histories of these women. The constant and continuous negotiation between teaching and family commitments was a crucially important component of their career development. The careers of these women had been life long but promotion had only begun on their returns to teaching. Their working careers had not been continuous or sequential in that stages or steps were omitted or missed. Likewise promotion had not been regular or orderly in that progress had been delayed and then development had been variable although, in some cases, promotion had been very rapid. These women claimed that they were not promotion ambitious initially in their teaching work. Only

one head had achieved any promotion prior to the break and even this head would discount the idea that she was ambitious at this stage in her working life. In the early years of their teaching these women were not developing career strategies centred only on their paid work. Rather, they were pursuing career and family strategies. They saw teaching as interesting and absorbing work and convenient in that such work could be obtained wherever the woman was located in respect of her partners' occupation and could be reconciled, as far as was possible, with anticipated family responsibilities.

So, it is part of the career and family strategies of these women to take a break from their teaching in order to have and to care for their own children. Mothering is an important and a desirable part of their family obligations and they necessarily (in their view) finish their teaching work when they reach the child-bearing stage. Sometimes their children were planned, sometimes not. But even if the timing of children was planned, it was not planned with the woman's teaching career in mind. Similarly, the return was hardly a return to a career that had been interrupted. Their teaching service had been interrupted; their promotion had not yet begun. These women returned to teaching and, having successfully negotiated a compromise of family and work responsibilities, then and only then, did the idea of seeking promotion begin to form.

It is also important to emphasise that these women did not perceive the break in service to have had totally negative effects on their work and their competence as primary and infant teachers. On the contrary, the break had increased the self-confidence of these women. Their breaks had not been complete and they were not anxious about the return. Their experiences at home had added to their understanding of the needs and capabilities of young children and had increased their confidence in their interactions with parents and with teaching colleagues.

In addition, the manner of the return was of critical importance: these women had been sought out. Their returns were initiated and in many cases encouraged by significant authority figures (heads, deputies, inspectors) in the local teaching network. On their returns, their perceptions of themselves was of women who were coping with both family and work responsibilities. They were anxious initially about their coping strategies, about trying to be competent teachers and caring mothers and wives. But these doubts were controlled (although not removed) when their family arrangements seemed to be working well and they were complimented on their classroom achievements. So their self-confidence increased and when they saw other women, in the network, their contemporaries and other women they knew, go for promotion and succeed, they were motivated to try for themselves. But the idea of career ambition is hardly appropriate since ambition was not what motivated these women. They needed the example of others and the encouragement of gatekeepers (heads, inspectors) to try for promotion and succeed.

The positive implications of a break and return to an occupation, necessitated by the pursuit of family and motherhood goals, have never been explored. The break has always been seen as a problem because career progress has been assumed to be work centred, to involve continuous work experience and orderly development and promotion up through an occupational hierarchy. The careers of married women can seldom fit or approximate such a model. The large majority of married women will be developing work and family strategies. Any attempt to match women's work experiences with some model of career centred solely on paid work is to distort the meaning of career for many professional women.

Clearly, external, economic and political factors will always be critical. The break and the return presented no problems for these women in the expansionist educational climate of the 1960s. But for these

women, the break and the manner of the return were all part of their career development. Following the break and the return and the successful negotiation of family obligations, these women came to redefine the meaning and significance of their teaching work. They applied for promotion and they were successful.

The sample consisted of 10 of the women who were interviewed. The women were selected from the local education authority and they were contacted initially by letter asking if they would be willing to take part in the research. Two headteachers had refused: one because of spouse involvement, the other because of pressure of work. All the women headteachers had been once married although I did not know in advance their current marital status. Neither was it possible to know in advance the extent of their family commitments; in particular, whether they had or did not have children. The transcribing of some of the interview material was done with the help of a small grant from the Nottingham University Research Fund.

NOTES

1. Some women teachers (and a small number of men teachers) break their teaching service for other reasons. But the break for childcare is numerically the most important.
2. The sample consisted of 1 in 2 of the women primary and infant heads in the city area of the county who had been 'once married' and 2 in 3 of the 'once married' women heads from another county area. The headteachers names and school addresses were obtained from the local education authority and they were contacted initially by letter asking if they would be willing to take part in the research. Two headteachers had refused: one because of spouse bereavement, the other because of pressure of work. All the women headteachers had been once married although I did not know in advance their current marital status. Neither was it possible to know in advance the extent of their family commitments; in particular, whether they had or did not have children. The transcribing of some of the interview material was done with the help of a small grant from the Nottingham University Research Fund.

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#### 4. Managing Childcare and Work Responsibilities

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MANAGING CHILDCARE AND WORK RESPONSIBILITIES: THE STRATEGIES OF MARRIED  
WOMEN PRIMARY AND INFANT HEADTEACHERS

INTRODUCTION

For married women who work, the public sphere of work and the private sphere of home and family (Stacey, 1981) are seldom maintained as separate and distinct as they can be for many men. Both women and men have responsibilities in both spheres. But whereas men can usually divide up their time and their commitments, devoting, let us say, the hours of nine to five each weekday to their work and evenings and weekends to their families, for women, these areas of responsibility and the expectations that the women feel themselves to have, cannot be so readily compartmentalized. This has resulted in much discussion about women's two roles (Klein, 1965; Fonda and Moss 1976; Barker and Allen, 1976; Mackie and Pattillo 1970) and about the problems of combining the dual responsibilities (Yeandle, 1984; Fonda and Moss 1976; Harper and Richmonds 1979; Sharpe, 1984). These difficulties become particularly acute when there are children in the family; when, in addition to maintaining the home, herself and her husband, the woman is responsible for the care, safe-keeping and emotional stability of the children of the marital union. In the large majority of cases, childcare is the woman's responsibility and women themselves acknowledge, accept and enjoy childcare as their primary responsibility, as perhaps, the most important part of their family role. But childcare cannot just be a task, a job to be done. Childcare also involves a strong emotional commitment, a love attachment that includes an intense, close and sustained relationship between the mother and the child. Women themselves define their own expectations about mothering; they set their own standards of childcare. But they are guided in this by cultural ideals about motherhood, about

What a 'good' mother is supposed to do and to be. Such ideals of motherhood are different in other societies, in different historical periods (Badinter, 1981; Dally, 1982) and in any particular period such ideals will vary between different social classes (Hardyment, 1984; Riley, 1983) and might also vary between different geographical areas and regions of a country.

But for women who work in Britain, sometimes (and increasingly) out of necessity, frequently out of choice, childcare and its emotional commitment have to become one out of a number of other responsibilities. Some researchers in the past have examined how women who work actually cope with childcare along with their other responsibilities (Thompson and Findlayson, 1963; Yudkin and Holme, 1963) and, at the present time, a longitudinal study of full-time working mothers and their children is being carried out by researchers at the Thomas Coram Research Unit (see, for example, Moss, 1986; Brannen, 1987). For women who work in a professional occupation, like teaching, their work commitments can never be only minimal; it is difficult only to put in the hours and nothing more of the self. Books have been written about the working careers of professional women (Musgrave and Wheeler-Bennett, 1972; Silverstone and Ward, 1980) and there has been some exploration of the historical roots and the psychological implications of a dual-role identity for professional women (Roland and Harris, 1979). But there is little data about how professional women have actually managed their family and career commitments; about the strategies that women have devised for coping with the various demands that are made of them and that they feel themselves to have. Of course, women teachers and other women professionals with very young children can choose not to work for a period and, indeed, most do so choose, giving up their careers for varying periods of time. The large majority of women teachers who have children of their own, break their



teaching service in order to have and to care for their own young children. Then, when they return to teaching (Evetts, 1987b), they can return to a part-time post with a varying time commitment, or they can undertake supply work, full-time or part-time, for short or longer periods, which involve filling in at a school for teachers who are temporarily absent. In England, supply work has been a very popular route back into teaching for women teachers until they feel able to return full-time. But how do women who have returned to teaching, part-time, full-time, or by supply teaching, cope with their childcare obligations and expectations while they are fulfilling their teaching responsibilities?

I have been conducting life history interviews with a sample of twenty-five married women who, at the time of the interview, were headteachers of primary and infant schools from two educational areas of an English midlands county. The sample consisted of one in two of the married women heads from schools in the city area of the county who had been 'once married' (15 headteachers) and two in three of the 'once married' women heads from another, generally more rural, county area (10 headteachers). This division between city and other county heads also reflects the division between the kind of schools these heads, as teachers, were returning to. In general, I was interested in the interrelationship of two themes: how married women had constructed their careers and how they had managed their family responsibilities. How their work career goals had been developed and family commitments met. The development of the teaching careers of these women has been dealt with elsewhere (Evetts, 1987a). The present article develops the second theme, the management of family obligations.

Women who were primary and infant headteachers are an interesting occupational group through which to study the effect of and the



interrelationship between family and career for women. Primary and particularly infant teaching is not an unusual career for women. Indeed, in England, it is a career in which women outnumber men (77% of teachers in maintained primary schools in England and Wales are women). So these women were not trail-blazing in an occupation in which men far-outnumbered women. Also, it is an occupation in which women can and do achieve promotion (44% of primary headteachers in England and Wales are women). So a sample of successful (in career terms) women who were headteachers was not a rare or a particularly unusual phenomenon; these women were representative of an increasing number of professional women who wanted both to have a family and to build a career in the sense of achieving promotion in their work. Given that primary and infant teaching is predominantly a woman's occupation and that a headship represented a modest degree of achievement in career terms for the women who make it, I wanted to consider the strategies that had been constructed by these women to enable them to cope with the various demands that had been made on them at different times in their lives. Out of this group of twenty-five women headteachers, all had been 'once married' and seventeen had had children of their own. This article is based on information mainly from the seventeen women headteachers who were mothers although material from the other heads is used where it is of relevance. It is concerned with how these women had coped with childcare and with teaching responsibilities when their own children were young.

It must be emphasized, however, that these women were returning to teaching and beginning to seek promotion in the 1960's, in a situation of widespread teacher shortage. This was a period of political optimism and economic expansion from which the education system benefitted directly. New schools were being opened; new educational ideas were welcomed; the school system was being expanded. The post war increase in the birthrate

was maintained until the 1960's and the school-age population was still increasing. Schools were full and there was a shortage of teachers particularly in the primary and infant sectors, the sectors where traditionally women teachers have outnumbered men. As a result, women primary teachers and particularly infant teachers were much in demand and married women teachers were encouraged to return to the classrooms. These economic and educational conditions are unlikely to return, certainly in the immediate future. The childcare strategies of these women might be more characteristic of a period of teacher shortage, educational expansion and local authority flexibility, therefore.

#### THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

##### Strategies

The theoretical orientation which I found most useful initially was the research that had been done in Britain on teacher strategies in connection with the work of teaching. Woods considers that 'strategies' are "increasingly coming to be regarded as the central concept in the interactionist approach, for it is where individual intention and external constraint meet. Strategies are ways of achieving goals". (Woods, 1983: 9).

Much of the early research on teacher strategies had focussed on teacher socialisation in the early years of teaching (Hannam et al, 1971; Taylor and Dale, 1971; Hanson and Hernington, 1976). Later developments led to a more extensive use of the concept of a 'coping strategy' which considered how teachers had coped with certain specific events or changes in their working situation (Hargreaves, 1977, 1978, 1979; Pollard, 1982; Woods, 1979). As Sikes explained, the idea of a coping strategy made it necessary to specify what it was that had to be coped with (the external constraint, problem, expectation) as well as "the creative act of coping" (Sikes et al, 1985: 13) which individual teachers had contrived and developed. Thus, what was interesting was the teachers' own views both of

the nature of the problem and of their ways of coping with it.

Such a model of a coping strategy was obviously intended as a way of analysing teachers responses to particular constraints and specific incidents in their work situation. The women in this study were responding to more generalized expectations about the responsibilities of 'a good mother' and 'a good teacher'. Thus they themselves were defining the nature of the expectations as well as creating a response to it. But the idea of a coping strategy is the theme around which this article is organized. In this article, the nature of the constraint that is the focus is the dual demands of family and work at particular key times in the family life cycle like when there were young children to be cared for as part of the woman's family obligations. It is not intended to imply that responsibility for children is the sum-total of a woman's family obligations. The nature and extent of a woman's domestic commitments are very wide-ranging and, although there are variations, usually domestic commitments include responsibilities for parents and other kin in addition to the immediate nuclear unit. But the concern of this article is with childcare. How did these women conceive of the constraints they were coping with? What childcare expectations did they set themselves? What strategies did these women devise to enable them to meet such expectations and yet continue and, indeed, develop their working careers?

The analysis of coping strategies has required a consideration of the 'constraints' that teachers have been required to handle. In the research to date, these have tended to be external, structurally generated constraints (change in secondary school organisation, Riseborough, 1981) or constraints generated by those in authority within educational institutions (Hanson and Herrington, 1976). The research conducted by Sikes et al (1985) indicated that their (secondary) teachers experienced constraints at three levels, societal, institutional and personal, and



they considered the kinds of constraints that their teachers felt to be important under these three headings.

Although societal and institutional constraints are critically important to all teachers careers, this article is concerned particularly with the personal constraints experienced by these women teachers (who at some stage became headteachers). These are the "influences that arise from the private life, family and personal biography of the individual teacher" (Sikes et al, 1985: 92). In fact, Sikes et al do not have a great deal to say about personal constraints. In terms of this article I propose to use the term 'expectations' rather than 'constraints'. This is in order to emphasize that these women were attempting to deal with and manage responsibilities that they had largely set for themselves rather than having to deal with a constraint that was defined and imposed by someone who had authority to insist that these women did certain things in certain ways. Thus I will be considering the expectations that these women set themselves regarding their childcare arrangements. I have identified three tasks that were common to all the women with young children and had to be managed in order for the woman to fulfil her teaching role. The three were:

- (i) the care of the pre-school child;
- (ii) the delivery of the young school-age child at school at the beginning, and return home at the end of the school day;
- (iii) the care of the young child who was unable to go to school because of illness.

What expectations did these women set themselves in respect of these three tasks? Gradually I was able to build up a picture of how these women would have liked to combine their responsibilities for their own children and their work responsibilities. Then I considered the responses they had in fact made to the expectations they had set

themselves. I was interested in the strategies that these women had devised to cope with their expectations. What resources had they used to meet such childcare demands and to develop their working careers? Finally, how did these women feel about the strategies they had devised? Were they content with their childcare arrangements or would they have liked to have done things differently?

### Resources

From the interviews with the headteachers, it became clear that certain types of resources were available to enable these teachers to cope with childcare and work responsibilities. Some types were used more than others. But a number of teachers had used several different types either at the same time or at different times in managing their childcare commitments. Some were satisfied with the arrangements they had made. Other teachers would have liked to have done things differently, if circumstances had allowed.

The first type of resource was to pay for assistance. These women could have paid for help with the childcare tasks as a way of meeting their family obligations. However, the employment of nannies or other childminders was not a strategy that was used by these teachers. With the one exception of care of the pre-school child, these women did not pay other individuals or organizations for the performance of these tasks. Several teachers had paid help with housework such as cleaning and occasionally such cleaners also helped with childcare. But, in general, paid assistance with childcare was not a solution that was adopted by this group of teachers. These women did not want to hand their young children over to the care of others; they wanted to do it themselves. The ideals of childcare with which they were operating precluded childminders and probably their social class position, together with financial limitations,

precluded the nanny solution.

Of much more significance were the second type, relationships, as a resource in their coping strategies. Over the course of their lives and careers, these teachers had maintained old and developed new sets of relationships that were used in different ways and at different times, to enable them to meet their work and family expectations. Three different types of relationship could be identified in the women's coping strategies:

- (i) husband (or male partner);
- (ii) parents and parents-in-law;
- (iii) neighbours and friends;

The third type of resource that was employed by these women in order to fulfil the childcare expectations that they had set themselves, were the advantages that attached to their work as primary and infant teachers. Primary and infant teaching, as a job of work, has some advantages over other occupations in enabling the woman to reconcile her childcare and work responsibilities. The shorter working day and the concurrence of the mothers holidays with her child's are well-known perks-of-the-job for women teachers. These advantages are not as clear-cut or as straight-forward as they seem at first sight since, for example, very few teachers finish their work when the bell goes at the end of the school day. However, in a period of teacher shortage when these women teachers were in high demand, there were other advantages which gave these women some room for manoeuvre.

A fourth resource, again attaching to the work situation, was the relationships these women had with work colleagues, fellow teachers. It emerged from the interviews that there were important networks of colleagues and friendship groups between teachers in primary and infant education that developed into supportive systems of assistance.



cooperation and exchange. Such networks have many of the characteristics of occupational communities. These women did not live in the same geographical area (and in the past, this was regarded as a defining characteristic of an occupational community) but, nevertheless, they had a common life-style, similar values, goals and expectations. But perhaps more important in this context, these communities of women teachers helped each other to manage their family and work commitments. In addition, teacher colleagues in the staffroom or in the wider teacher community, assisted these women in the working out of their occupational and family identities and in arriving at the compromise they would have to make between family and teaching commitments at different times in their lives. Colleagues and headteachers were called on to comment and eventually to endorse strategies. Colleagues and headteachers gave practical assistance and advice. They related their own experiences and were able to give informed opinions about strategies as they were in the process of being developed. Then, unless external constraints were paramount, the woman teacher was able to choose her own identity according to the values, goals and ideals she held to be most important. By comparing sometimes conflicting role models and role strategies, and bearing in mind her own resources, the woman could identify and develop her own work and family strategy.

#### COPING STRATEGIES

In the examples and illustrations of coping strategies and use of resources which follow, pseudonyms have been used for the headteachers.

##### Care of the Pre-School Child

In terms of the first childcare task, the care of the pre-school child, these women had clearly been influenced (they may even have been

taught in their college courses) the various theories of child development elaborated by child psychologists of the 1950s and 1960s (for example, J. Bowlby, 1947, 1951, 1969). Such theories had seemed to suggest the necessity of a close and continuous relationship between a mother and her child, particularly her pre-school child. In terms of the expectations that these women had set themselves, their life plans and their career strategies had included a wish to stay at home with their pre-school children, at least until their youngest child was old enough to be able to go to an infant or a nursery school.

"I'd always planned to have a family and be at home until they were five. Perhaps have two children and stay off until one was at school and the other was at nursery."  
(Mrs. Grant).

Most of these teachers had taken time out of teaching to care for their babies and very young children. Only one teacher had continued to work without a break. The others had returned to full-time teaching after periods of time ranging from eighteen months to eight years (Evetts, 1987b). Several had returned via part-time or supply teaching. But all but one of these women had returned to full-time teaching before their youngest child had started at infant school. Either because of external pressure (the acute shortage of, particularly infant, teachers, in the 1950s and 1960s) or because of family circumstances (like the break-up of a marriage or a husband's wish to change career direction) or because of personal inclination (lack of complete satisfaction with the housewife/mother role), these women returned to teaching earlier than their original life plans had indicated.

"I hadn't planned to go back to teaching until my daughter was five. She was three in fact when I went back. But I hadn't planned to go back and I didn't think I'd be going back for very long."  
(Mrs. Spencer).

One consequence of their early returns to teaching were feelings of

maternal guilt about their strategies experienced by several of these teachers. The tensions between personal expectations regarding care of the young child and other powerful forces were very real.

"I found a job without any hassle at all and the feelings of guilt because I really wanted to be at home with him. But, on the other hand, I knew that if I didn't earn, there was no chance that (my husband) would have the sort of career that was going to make him a happy man. We found a place in a super day nursery. (My son) was a very sociable, happy baby and he had a lovely time at the nursery. I suffered very badly. I felt it very keenly the day he walked for the first time and they saw it and I didn't and I shed lots and lots of tears during those first few months. It wasn't a particularly happy return to teaching."

(Mrs. Howard).

"My main concern was that I knew all the answers, if you know what I mean. Before having my children I'd sat in staffrooms and said, and heard said, 'Well, what can you expect of a working mum: no time.' And here I was, a working mum with no time for the kids. That was very hard."

(Mrs. Porter).

The conflicts between work responsibilities and family responsibilities were most acute during the period when their own children were very young. Their dilemmas were hard to resolve. Cultural ideals of motherhood, supposedly with the backing and support of psychological theories of child deprivation, seemed to imply that these women should be at home with their pre-school children. Most of these women wanted to be at home. Yet, at the same time, a critical shortage of teachers, personal circumstances or personal inclination were pushing these women back to their teaching work. The dilemma was partially resolved in that they were convinced that their young children took priority over their working careers. Developments in their careers had to wait (Evetts, 1987a). They had returned to teaching but the well-being of their own children was a very high priority. Strategies were devised using the resources they had available, to enable them to meet their responsibilities towards their own very young children, continue with their teaching and sometimes even to

reconcile their feelings of maternal guilt.

Three teachers, (Mrs. Howard see above, Mrs. Firth and Mrs. Grant) had paid for day nursery places for their young children. In one instance a cleaner had also been a childminder:

"(When I returned to teaching), I had two children still at home all day. I've had somebody in to do housework since (the third child) was a baby and she's been coming daily to help me. So we merely upped her time and she looked after the children."  
(Mrs. Dutton).

Sometimes, neighbours and friends had assisted with the care of the pre-school child, until the children were old enough to attend a school nursery. But where neighbours and friends had helped, payment had usually been made because such care had involved a more or less full-time commitment by the carer and hence formal arrangements had had to be agreed. Thus, in the period of teacher shortage in England in the 1960s, Mrs. Firth was frequently requested to do supply work.

"I happened to be talking to my neighbour one day about this and she had had the sort of job where you couldn't just dash in and out and she said to me, quite out of the blue, 'look, if you want to go back, if you'd like to come to some sort of arrangement with me, I'll look after the baby while you go to work'. Her baby was about five weeks younger than mine. So I went to work, she looked after the children and we shared the money. That was how it went."

For Mrs. Grant, a close friend had looked after her baby daughter for "a small payment" while she had completed her college course and her probationary years teaching. Then the friend had helped to introduce the child to a nursery close to Mrs. Grant's own school, taking her first for one hour, then two and so on.

With care of the pre-school child, the help of neighbours and friends had been used in exchange for a mutually agreed payment. The informality of the relationship was not affected and the arrangement came to an end usually when the child was old enough to attend a nursery.



Husbands played virtually no part in the every day care of the pre-school child. Such a child was the responsibility of the mother, whether or not she was working. Mrs. Firth summed up the sort of help with child care that her husband had been able to give.

"His help was more in terms of doing specific things with them rather than looking after their daily needs. For instance, he took them swimming every week and he took them at a time when it was most useful to me, so that I could get on and do something else without the children. He took them to the library once a week. Later, he supervised their piano practice, their homework. But in their general care and that sort of thing, well, I did that."

Parents and in-laws sometimes played a part in enabling a teacher to return to work before her child reached school age. With her mother's help, Mrs. Tanner had returned to part-time supply teaching only six months after having her son. Then, after one year of supply work, she returned full-time.

"I returned to part-time supply teaching six months after having my son. My mum looked after him. We were living with my mum and dad then. After twelve months doing supply, the authority wanted me to go to work at (a school some distance away) for a whole term. So my mother and I talked it over. I might as well go back full-time so that I know where I am (and wouldn't have to keep changing schools). My mum looked after (the son) until he went to nursery school."

But this kind of arrangement was unusual, however. Apart from Mrs. Tanner, only Mrs. Butler in this group of teachers had received parental assistance with pre-school children. When Mrs. Butler returned to teaching full-time, her son was four and her daughter was fifteen months. Her son started in the nursery of the school where she taught and her daughter was looked after by her mother for three days and by a friend for two days a week.

Primary and infant teaching, as a job of work, has clear advantages over other occupations, even within teaching, in that the work situation enables some reconciliation of work and family expectations. In the



1960s, in the period of teacher shortage, these women could take their own pre-school children into school with them. There, these children attended the newly provided nursery classes or they sat in with their mothers classes.

"When I returned to work, my daughter was three and my son was four. They went into the nursery of the school where I was teaching. It worked very well because they had access to me if they needed me and vice versa. It was as ideal to me as it could be."

(Mrs. Ellis).

"I said I could only go if I could bring my daughter with me. It was an infant class. She was three and could fit in with what was happening. She was actually a little nuisance. But I went and the staff were very kind and supportive."

(Mrs. Spencer).

In addition, the occupational community of teachers played an important part in supporting these women in their work and family strategies. The support and encouragement of colleagues and even more important, of the headteacher, was a critical determinant of the perceived success of the strategy and of the woman's positive attitude to the arrangements she had made. The community of working colleagues gave support and encouragement, gave practical advice and assistance, helped women teachers to make use of certain occupational advantages and, in general, assisted teacher/mothers to develop strategies to enable them to cope with the care of the pre-school child and to feel relatively content with such a strategy.

"Some teachers have brought their babies into school with them. Some of my staff who wanted to do supply work when they've had a baby, they'll bring the baby in the pram. Also, I see that I can put their little ones into the nursery and a lot of my staff have got children who have gone through my school."

(Mrs. Addison).

### The Delivery to School and Return Home of the Child

The second childcare task that had to be managed was the arrival of the young school-age child at school and the child's departure from school and return home at the end of the school day. These are tasks to be managed by the mother for a period but these teacher/mothers varied as to how long they felt such tasks to be their responsibility. The child's arrival at school in the mornings was not perceived to be a problem by these mothers. Infant school children could go with the mother to her school, could be dropped off early at the local school as mothers and fathers made their own ways into work, could walk to school with their own friends or with neighbours and their children. This task was largely dismissed by the teacher/mothers as relatively unproblematical.

However, the return of the child home, at the end of the school day was a different matter. This was acknowledged to be a difficulty and had caused these teacher/mothers considerable anxiety. These mothers differed in terms of at what age it was considered appropriate for children to return home and let themselves into the house. Most conceded that secondary school children were old enough to let themselves into their homes after school. Most children of junior school age could make their own way home from school since junior schools were usually within easy walking distance of their homes and, anyway, children of this age did not want their mothers to collect them outside the school gates. However, these teacher/mothers were in total agreement about their dislike of children returning to an empty house. These mothers were horrified by the idea that their children were "latchkey children", a media word used in the 1960s to invoke sympathy for children and condemnation of working mothers who could not be home for their children's return from school.

These teacher/mothers felt that they should have been at home when their children returned from school. But these teachers could not be at

home if, as was mostly the case, their own journeys back took longer than their childrens. Guilt was the inevitable consequence when strategies did not completely meet with expectations.

"Then we thought he could cope and he went to the local school (age 9). He had a key to let himself in and out of the house. So he was a poor little latchkey child." (Mrs. Edwards).

Strategies were devised to try to avoid the child having to return to an empty house. These teachers used any available resource and the arrangements they made were often highly complex. Occasionally, husbands were able to help. But, in general, their help was intermittent rather than regular.

"(My son) never came home to an empty house. He used to go to a next-door-but-one neighbour until I got home from school. When he was at secondary school, I was generally home before him. And his father's hours were sometimes flexible." (Mrs. Northfield).

Parents and in-laws were not used by this group of teachers in the delivery or collection of children from school, although neighbours and friends were sometimes called upon to help (see Mrs. Northfield above).

Mrs. Butler's children travelled to school and back on a school bus.

Mrs. Butler's friend, who had two children of the same age and went to the same school, would meet the bus and look after all the children until Mrs. Butler returned. This arrangement continued even when the children were older.

"When they went to the comprehensive, they always knew that (the friend) was around to go to even when they got older and they didn't need to go to her. They would let themselves in, but they still went over to (the friend) should there be the slightest problem. I mean, she was a tower of strength to me."

Other teachers had made similar arrangements with friends and neighbours.

"I wasn't able to be at home when they came home from school. My neighbour met them. They never went into the



house until I came home. They used to go to school in the morning with my neighbour's child."  
(Mrs. Firth).

"We all arrived home together. If I was ever going to be very delayed for a staff meeting or some crisis, I had a couple of friends near me and I would get a message through to the school instructing the children that they were to be redirected, if you like, and then the friend would have a cup of tea ready and a biscuit or something and then I'd collect them when I got back. But they never ever came into an empty house."  
(Mrs. Howard).

It is important to note, in addition, that primary and infant teaching, as a job of work, has some advantages over other occupations in enabling the woman to reconcile her expectations towards her school-age children with the demands of her work. The woman teacher could choose to have her own school-age children at her school rather than at their local school. Some of these women took advantage of this option, particularly when their children were young, as a way of managing their expectations to deliver, fetch and be on hand for their children.

"While I was there, my daughter became school-age. We didn't want her to go to the local infant school. Being in education, I had the option of taking her with me to my school. So I did. That worked well. My husband dropped us off at 8 o'clock in the morning. I didn't stay too late. Usually we caught the 4 o'clock, 4.30 bus. But it was a long day for her."  
(Mrs. Grant).

In addition, it was possible for these women to leave their schools directly at the end of their school day, in order to be back at home at the same time as, or only shortly after their own children. Most of these teachers had developed a minimal work commitment strategy, while their children were young. They delayed promotion, rejected additional responsibilities and they worked through their lunch hours so as to be able to fulfil their teaching responsibilities and yet not be back too late for their own children.

"For a while, I did leave school early. I used to get there early, work through my lunchtime and then leave

early. I wouldn't take any promotion at all while my family were very much a large part of my life."  
(Mrs. Collins).

"I rushed out of school, I didn't work late. I got there at 8 o'clock in the morning and worked my lunch hour. So I left on the dot, caught two buses home and I was there to meet her when this friend delivered her. I was at home to receive her and that was very important to me then."

(Mrs. Grant).

"I managed to be at home when the boys arrived home from school. It used to mean taking a lot of work home to do after they'd gone to bed in the evening. But I always had a horror of children coming home to an empty house, certainly small children. Once they'd got to about fifteen I didn't worry quite so much because it seems silly, doesn't it? I mean, they're quite grown up by then. But I thought coming into an empty house was very depressing and very lonely for a child and this is where the taxis came in. I used to get taxis home from my school. I mean I could have arranged for them to have lifts with friends and be left and I could have been home soon after. But I did not ever want them to have to use a key to get into a cold empty house with no kettle on. We arrived home together and it was a jolly bundle-in, you can imagine." (Mrs. Howard).

But, in addition to such occupational advantages, one of the most interesting aspects of teaching as a job of work was the extent to which women teachers had made use of relationships with women teacher colleagues as a way of managing their teaching duties and their responsibilities towards their own young children.

"Most of the staff at the school at that time were mothers about the same as me who understood and we covered for each other. I used to pop out to see my eldest son in things like the school sports or nativity play. Another teacher would take my class and then I would take hers. The head was as kind as that. It took me about 20 minutes to walk there - I didn't drive then. I hadn't a car. I would get there as fast as my legs would carry me, see him, make sure he'd seen me and then disappear. So I didn't miss much. I was lucky."  
(Mrs. Collins).

In many important respects, these women teachers seem to have worked together with their colleagues to help to resolve or manage pressing childcare problems. Primary and infant staffrooms formed



occupational communities of women who had similar life styles, had similar values and expectations and had either experienced similar problems and difficulties or had knowledge and understanding of them. Solutions to childcare tasks could be explored and cooperation was usually forthcoming. This could be particularly important in helping women teachers manage their expectations about collecting their own young children from school.

"I went to see the headteacher at his school and asked if she knew anyone that I could rely on to look after (my son) after school for a couple of days each week. And she said, 'Yes, me'. She said, 'I know what you're doing. It's only for two days a week. He's quite welcome to say here. I'm usually here 'til four-thirty, five o'clock and if I'm not, the caretaker will be here and he'll be quite willing to have him'. So that was the arrangement."  
(Mrs. Tanner).

"It all worked very well because I got good cooperation from the teaching staff of their school. You know, who would have (my children) in their room until I got there and things like that."  
(Mrs. Ellis).

There are, then, various highly practical ways in which the teacher/mothers of young children can be helped by colleagues in their occupational community to carry out their strategies for coping with their childcare and teaching responsibilities. Much depends on the attitude of headteachers. A cooperative and understanding headteacher could ensure the success of such coping strategies. And in an occupation where women are in authority positions, women heads who have either experienced or are sympathetic to complex childcare arrangements, can assist in the construction and negotiation of a successful managing strategy.

#### The Care of the Young Child who was Sick

For the third childcare task, caring for sick children, these teacher/mothers had clear expectations about the appropriate course of action: mothers should stay at home to look after a child if that child

was sick and unable to attend school. Some teachers claimed that they did this. But it was interesting that most of these women teachers claimed that their children were seldom ill. They felt that they were lucky in that theirs were not ailing or sickly children. But this justification occurred so frequently that it might be possible to hypothesize that working mothers have a different perception of what constitutes 'illness' compared with mothers who are at home. However, these teacher/mothers were clear that in times of 'real' sickness, their place should have been at home with their child.

"I was extremely fortunate in having a couple of children who never seemed to be ill. And if they were, it was during the school holidays. I think we had a couple of bouts of 'flu' and I'm afraid that my attitude then to the job was, I'm not indispensable but I am to my children when they are ill."

(Mrs. Howard).

"I took time off. But they were very seldom ill and things like mumps and so on they contrived to have in the holidays which was very convenient."

(Mrs. Firth).

"Well, I'm ever so lucky because I have a really healthy family and the twice that they had child complaints, once was during the Christmas holidays when they both got chickenpox and then when (my daughter) had mumps, it was during the Easter holiday. (Apart from that) it was just an odd day that I stayed with them."

(Mrs. Pointer).

But maternal guilt was experienced whenever the mother was

uncertain about the seriousness of the sickness or where the arrangements were felt by the mother to be unsatisfactory.

"If I wasn't sure, say if he had a cold, he went to school with - 'if you're not very well, your teacher will tell me'. It sounds as if I sent him to school whenever. That's not really true. But if it was something minor, it was - 'go to school and we'll see how you are'."

(Mrs. Tanner).

"There are times when you think, has he really got tummy ache? Should I really be sending him to school? And then feeling very guilty. You should be at home looking after these children. And I've talked to other mothers who think that. I remembered the times when my mum used

to tuck me up very cosily on the settee in front of a coal fire and I was all cosy and lovely and I should be doing that for my children. I did it at the weekends. I tried to make up."  
(Mrs. Collins).

So, these teacher/mothers were not always able or willing to fulfil their expectation that they should stay at home with children who were sick. The strategies they devised to deal with the care of sick children involved the use of several resources. Husbands were seldom in a position to help. Their own work and careers prevented them giving any practical assistance and the men were not asked. A sick child was clearly the woman's responsibility. The only exceptions to this were Mrs. Edwards' husband who, as a sales representative was, to an extent, his own boss and Mrs. Holden, married to a laboratory manager.

"If one of the children was ill, he would normally stay at home or if they'd got something like a cold, you know, a bit groggy, he'd often take them out with him in the car."

(Mrs. Edwards).

"Well, he was never really ill. But my husband always kept some of his days holiday. If (my son) was off, he would be off if I was not able. But if he was very ill, I would be off."

(Mrs. Holden).

More importantly, in times of a child's illness, for those women with parents or in-laws living close by, these relatives would be called upon to enable the teacher to continue at work.

"My mother and in-laws helped. If there was any illness, they would come to the house and stay with the children."  
(Mrs. Butler).

"In cases of illness, my mum filled in. We used to fetch her. My husband had a little scooter. He would go to my mums on his scooter and bring my mum back in dad's car, and then reverse this in the evening."  
(Mrs. Tanner).

Even if parents and in-laws lived a considerable distance away, they might still be willing and able to assist the woman to continue at work.



"If it was going to be a lengthy illness, like mumps or measles or chickenpox, then my father-in-law, who had retired (lived on the south coast) was very happy to come and stay with us and look after them. He used to work for British Rail so he had free passes and also could get quarter fares. He loved to come anyway and would come at the drop-of-a-hat."

(Mrs. Spencer).

Usually such assistance was given more than willingly. Only one teacher, Mrs. Porter, claimed that her parents refused to help. Another, Mrs. Ellis, was reluctant to call on her in-laws because they had expressed reservations about her return to work.

"I didn't have to ask for much support from my mother-in-law, who lived (in the same town). She wasn't certain that I was doing the right thing to be back at work. My place should have been at home with the children, she felt, and so she wasn't always cooperative when I needed her to be. I called on her now and then, but not very often."

(Mrs. Ellis).

So, relations with parents and in-laws, particularly if they lived close, were a valuable resource for women teachers in enabling the woman to continue at work when her young children were ill. Friends and neighbours were used less often in times of sickness, presumably because, if these friends had children of their own, the teachers would be unwilling to risk spreading the illness. Where friends were asked, they did not have their own children at home.

"We had this grandma-type neighbour who lived next door. So, if it was just a snuffle, she would say 'Oh I know how to cope with that. Off you go'. So there was never any period where I had a problem about illnesses."

(Mrs. Pointer).

There were further advantages, attaching to the work situation itself, which could be made use of by the teacher/mother of a sick child. Again, however, the attitude of the headteacher was a critical factor in determining the successful use of such resources. But having received cooperation from their own headteachers, these current heads were sympathetic in their turn.

"If I was unsure, I took them to school with me. The head didn't mind. I know there are mixed feelings about that but I've said to my nursery teacher, she has a daughter who is a bit off colour at the moment. She has parents who will look after her but they can't tomorrow, so I said bring her into school. So I'm going through it now with my staff."

(Mrs. Spencer).

"I was a head quite young so I had a room and there was a little rest bed in there and they might stay with me there a couple of days if they were a little bit off colour. My own staff bring their children in occasionally."

(Mrs. Ellis).

"There were odd times when I would take my children into school. It's all unofficial. It depends very much on the headteacher, the headteacher's attitude to 'alien' children visiting the school. I personally take the view that other children visiting school for the odd day aren't in the slightest bit offensive. If they behaved like morons I would think twice but, in principle, I don't object to it at all. I have come across objections. I was told by one headteacher that I worked for, that it simply was not acceptable that either of my children should be with me during the school day and those were the days that I said, 'Well I'm sorry. I shall not be in then. I have to stay at home because they come first'. It just depends on the headteacher's attitude."

(Mrs. Howard).

#### CONCLUSIONS

These were, then, the different kinds of resources that were available to these teacher/mothers in their development of coping strategies to enable them to meet family and work expectations at the time in their lives when they had their own young children to care for. It must be emphasized once again that the situation for women teachers in state primary schools now is different from the one experienced by these women. Women teachers who are mothers might be finding it harder now with fewer part-time posts, fewer jobs through falling rolls, less flexibility from colleagues and headteachers, and so on. However, for these women, in a time of teacher shortage, they could negotiate, compromise and to an



extent resolve their pressing family and work dilemmas.

In caring for the pre-school child, several of these women had taken time out of full-time teaching until their youngest child was at least three. Where teachers had returned before this, most had returned to do intermittent supply work and often part-time supply work. When they had returned, some had paid for help with the pre-school child. Most often, they had made use of occupational advantages and, with the agreement of headteachers, they had taken such children into school with them.

The childcare task that had produced the most anxiety for these teacher/mothers, perhaps because it was a more continuous, longer lasting problem, was making arrangements for someone to be at home to receive young children who were returning from school. All these teachers had worried about their children returning to "an empty house". They were anxious about emotional harm and about long-term damage to their children. These women did not want their children to be home before them. In the strategies they had devised to avoid such a contingency, these teachers had used all the different kinds of relationship resources, including work relations, available to them. They had made use of occupational advantages and they had adapted and modified their work commitment for the period while their own children were young. Finally, in caring for the sick child, again relationship resources, including working colleagues, had been used. And, throughout, reassurance about strategies had been sought from work colleagues and headteachers.

Initially in this research, it had been assumed that the husband and wife relationship would be a highly significant factor in the lives and careers of these women who at some stage achieved headteacher posts. The research done by the Rapoports (1971, 1978) had focussed attention on how wives and husbands had helped each other meet both family and career

obligations. In fact, although most of these women claimed to have had the support and encouragement of their male partners in constructing their working careers, very few husbands were able or willing to give any practical assistance in coping with the childcare tasks. The women's relationships with their work colleagues, with their parents and with their neighbours and friends proved to be much more important in the management and reconciliation of family and work demands and expectations.

Of course, at the centre, doing the organising of the resources and constructing and managing the expectations and the constraints, were the individual women teachers. The interactionist view of self is that self develops out of interaction with others and is a product of social relationships (P. Woods, 1983). Certainly, relationships were very important for these women teachers. In constructing their identities, both at work (Nias, 1985) and in their personal and family lives, these women selected from role models, those characteristics that impressed them most. In developing their coping strategies, these women observed and discussed with colleagues, selected from the resources that were available to them (where alternatives were available) and they selected according to their view of what constituted good mothering and being a good teacher. So it is important to remember that the teacher/mother herself, the decision-maker, the organizer and the manager, was the most critical resource. The success of the strategies depended on their view of themselves and their attitudes towards what they were doing. Some of these teachers had expressed worries and feelings of guilt about their childcare arrangements and much of their anxiety was about personal identity, about what they appeared to others to be. Several of these women asserted that they had not been ambitious (Evetts, 1987a). It was important to them, in the way they saw themselves, that they could continue to assert that home and family had come first at certain times in

their lives. For several of these women their jobs and their careers took second place, while they had young children. Only subsequently, when their children were older and again with the example and suggestion of colleagues and headteachers, did they consider developing and promoting their own careers.

But, at whatever stage they had become career ambitious, nevertheless, success in their family lives, which not all had managed to achieve, was as important to their view of self, as success in their careers. The two were rated equally.

"I've had a reasonable life as a teacher. I've had promotion and, at the same time, I have a husband who has been with me since I married him twenty-odd years ago. I have a home, quite a nice home. I have two children. And I have the satisfaction of going to the top of my little tree. I don't think it would be fair for me to ask for more."

(Mrs. Firth).

But success in the career could not compensate for perceived failure in the personal and family sphere.

"The thing I would most like in my life would be to have time to be a housewife and a mother. The biggest present anyone could give to me would be for someone to say you needn't work any more. You see magazine articles, you hear on the media about women wanting to be this and do this. They're obviously women who have never had to work all their working lives, otherwise they wouldn't feel like that. I would love to be a housewife and a mother. I've worked all my adult life out of necessity. I would love to be at home, to take time to enjoy my house, to take time to cook, to sit, to sew. It's something I've very much missed out on and something my children have missed out on."

(Mrs. Porter).

So, success in the personal and family sphere was as important to these women as their career achievements. This is the real dilemma of dual identity (Roland and Harris, 1979). They had set themselves high standards of mothering and housewifery as well as high professional standards at work.

"I know that I drive myself to make a good job of



motherhood and work. I've felt I must do this the proper way. I must cook proper meals; I mustn't have convenience foods. I must clean the house as thoroughly as I would if I was at home all day. I must make some of the children's clothes because it's good to make the children's clothes. And in trying to do everything probably sometimes I've exhausted myself. But then that's me - I've always been very conscious that I didn't want the children to suffer in any way, or my husband in any way, because I was heavily committed at work." (Mrs. Ellis).

These women worked hard to fulfil the expectations they imposed upon themselves, yet doubts about their successes persisted. Such doubts were essentially about perceptions of self and personal identity: of seeming to be a career person when what counted for a woman were domestic and maternal achievements. Several of these women continually minimised their own organisational role in their career and family strategies. They had been 'lucky'; their children had been adaptable, flexible, healthy; their neighbours, friends and work colleagues had been 'a tremendous help'; their husbands had been 'supportive'; their careers had gone well because they had been 'in the right place at the right time'. They dismissed the idea of themselves as the planners, managers and coordinators of their coping strategies.

Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of the findings of this research was the significance of the sense of community and the sharing of difficulties, experiences and solutions that seemed to exist between women teachers in primary and infant education. In the past, the concept of 'occupational community' has been used to refer to instances where various characteristics of the man's work have resulted in the formation of a community of families who live together in a relatively isolated community and who share a common life style, common values and so on. The necessity of a common residential location has been challenged by Salaman (1974). It is highly likely that communities which develop in connection with female occupations, will have rather different sorts of characteristics.

These women did not live in the same geographical area; their husbands had different kinds of occupations and, to this extent, their life styles varied. However, there was a strong sense of a shared identity and there was considerable fellow-feeling amongst these women facing conflicting demands on their time and energy that, amongst males, would be termed 'comradeship'. Amongst females, such mutual support might be termed 'sisterhood' if this concept could be separated from its feminist, consciousness-raising connotations (Radcliffe Richards, 1982: 45-48). These women had similar sets of obligations; there was broad agreement concerning the expectations they set themselves; they had identified and, in many cases, experienced common problems and difficulties; and they pulled together to fulfil the tasks and to share solutions that had worked. Out of necessity, women in primary and infant teaching had worked, cooperated and supported each other in diverse ways.

With tasks like childcare that are generally agreed to be the woman's responsibility and which women want to do, women will construct strategies making use of work colleagues as well as other relationship resources like kin and neighbours. And if the occupation is one which permits a degree of manoeuvre and flexibility in terms of the amount of career commitment and advancement its members display at different stages in their life cycle, then women will manage their family and career responsibilities. Clearly there were grounds for optimism in the way these women had succeeded at work and most had succeeded in their family lives. Where women had been permitted a degree of control over their work situations and how they had combined their various responsibilities, then both family and work expectations could be managed. Also, where women, as heads, had achieved a measure of control over their staff and their resources in schools, then manoeuvrability, cooperation, assistance and mutual support could be maximised. Mrs. Curtis, a head without children



of her own, explained how she was assisting married women teachers on her own staff to manage their family and work responsibilities (though clearly her manoeuvres were limited by local authority demands for a cut-back in part-time teaching posts):

"It is just a fact of life that the women have to have the children. If you are out of teaching for a year or eighteen months, you lose your confidence and it's very hard to get back. I have several promotable teachers here so I have part-timers in. I've always promoted internally. Then, when the women decide to have their families, I've tried to bring them back as part-timers. I've got two at the moment that came as probationers to me. One has a baby of eighteen months and she's now back two and a half-days a week and finds that ideal. The other one had a baby six months ago and is coming back in January just for one day a week. They are both excellent teachers and should be heads, when they get the children out of the way. So if I can keep them ticking over. You see, it's easier for them to come back here where they know; they know the staff, they know the resources, they know the children, than go and do part-time in a different school where they will always be struggling. This makes it easier for them.

I've just had another girl go off on maternity leave and I'm hoping that between the three of them, to mix it so that they can all keep taking up part-time jobs in rotation to having a couple of children. In my way then I think I'm helping them to get over the gap of having children and finding it difficult and then they can come back into the profession because the profession needs people like that. It's a case of juggling and persuading people."

(Mrs. Curtis).

So, in an occupation such as primary and infant teaching, where not only are women in a majority but also women have achieved positions of authority in schools, then women can also acquire a degree of control over work situations, over the career developments of staff and over the allocation of career resources. In such a situation, there are more opportunities for decisions to be taken and arrangements to be made with women's careers and family obligations, with women's career strategies, in mind. Where women have a degree of control, then through relationships and general occupational flexibility, career and family strategies can be

negotiated and managed.

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## THE INTERNAL LABOUR MARKET FOR PRIMARY TEACHERS

### 5. The Internal Labour Market for Primary Teachers

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## THE INTERNAL LABOUR MARKET FOR PRIMARY TEACHERS

How can life or career history research, usually associated with interactionist theoretical perspectives in sociology, be reconciled with explanations on the macro level of analysis which consider the effects of expansion or contraction on an occupation? In autumn 1985 and summer 1986, I conducted a series of career history interviews with a sample of twenty-five married women who were headteachers of primary and infant schools from two educational areas of a midlands county.<sup>1</sup> I was interested in the career and family strategies of women who had, at some stage, opted for career advancement in primary teaching in addition to having and coping with family responsibilities and who had been successful in their achievement of headteacher posts. Most of these women had achieved their headships in the 1960s and 1970s and they were all married or had been married. The study was exploratory research designed to produce suggestive hypotheses rather than statistical generalisations.

There were clear advantages in the use of interactionist concepts and perspectives in the conduct of this research. The emphasis on meaning and its construction helped to make sense of the notions of 'work' and 'career' in the lives of these women. The interactionist concept of 'subjective career' assisted in the understanding of how these women actually experienced their careers and the term 'strategy' helped in the analysis of how these women had coped with family goals as well as with career development.

However, if there are advantages in interactionist concepts and research perspectives, there are concomitant disadvantages that need to be recognised and confronted, such as a potential neglect of structural factors. Interactionist studies of teachers have recognised certain structural factors, namely external political and economic conditions

(Sikes et al, 1985: Ball and Goodson, 1985) but they have mostly ignored a second type of structural factor, those peculiar to the occupation itself, that is the nature of the labour market for teachers. External structural conditions such as economic prosperity/stringency, political optimism/pessimism and educational expansion/contraction are acknowledged and described but then are regarded as a given set of circumstances in the context of which individuals go about constructing their teaching careers and devising their coping strategies. But we are no closer to an understanding of how these external structural influences actually bring about opportunities for certain individuals rather than others, nor how they shape the attitudes and meanings teachers attach to their careers and their work.

I want to argue that what has been neglected in interactionist research is any analysis of the labour market and in particular the internal labour market for teachers. We need an elaboration of the characteristics unique to the careers of teachers and of those shared with other white collar occupations and professions. If we can elaborate upon the market characteristics for teachers of different types and levels by examining the attributes that are important for promotion and progress in the teaching career, then it will be possible to explain how external structural factors are worked out in the lives and careers of individual teachers.

Certainly in my own research on the career and family strategies of the married women primary headteachers, I have made constant reference to the optimistic and expansionist economic, political and educational climate of the 1960s and 1970s. This was when the women in my study were beginning to develop their working careers and were looking for promotion. They themselves made constant references to the fact that their expertise was much in demand at that time. Those who had taken time out of teaching

were sought out and their returns were encouraged and facilitated. Similarly, the teaching skills of these women were recognised and they were urged to seek promotion. Clearly such external factors as teacher shortage and educational expansion influenced how these women saw their work and constructed their careers. But I want to go beyond commenting on a particular historical era to consider what the subjective careers of the women primary headteachers in my study can tell us about the internal labour market for teachers. Only by understanding both the general and the particular characteristics of the teaching labour market can we accommodate teachers' accounts of their career histories and biographies within an explanation of wider structural influences and their effect.

## INTERNAL LABOUR MARKETS

### Defining the Concept

The concept of an internal labour market developed out of attempts by labour economists in the 1950s to analyse the constraints on free competition for and free movement of labour (Loveridge, 1983). But much of its significance has come from its use by radical or marxist economists to explain segmentation in labour markets. The labour market is seen as being made up of at least two segments: the primary<sup>2</sup> sector, made up of jobs with stable earnings and employment prospects, and the secondary sector of jobs offering only part-time or intermittent employment, relatively low earnings, no job security or promotion prospects. The Piore model (1975) is the most popularly cited (Dex, 1985) and Piore introduced a further division within the primary sector of the labour market between the upper independent and lower subordinate primary jobs. The upper primary sector of the labour market was made up of professional



and managerial jobs, with higher pay, mobility and turnover patterns.

The lower primary sector of the labour market contained occupations with moderate levels of pay, with less variety in the content of their work and with less control and influence over the work of others (Dex, 1985, p. 132).

Then, according to Doeringer and Piore (1971), primary sector occupations develop internal labour markets where competition for promotion to the upper primary sector is restricted to those already in the primary sector occupation. This internal labour market thereby constitutes a career structure whereby some members can progress and achieve promotion in the career whereas others are left behind to occupy lower primary sector jobs.

#### Teaching as a Primary Sector Occupation

Using such a model, teaching is a primary sector labour market occupation. It offers relatively high wages, good working conditions, responsibility and control over the work in the classroom and employment stability. In addition, teaching has its own internal labour market with a nationally recognised career structure. Through the internal labour market some teachers are promoted into upper primary sector occupations (educational management) whereas others remain in lower primary sector jobs (classroom teaching). In the internal labour market of teaching, competition for promotion is confined to those already qualified and employed as teachers. The headteacher position is located in the upper primary sector of the labour market since these posts involve management and administration, higher pay, more responsibility, variety and control over the content of their work, opportunities for individual initiative and decision-making and control over the organisation of the work of other



teachers and over their promotion prospects. Secondary schools have further forms of 'middle management'. But in infant and junior schools there is a starker divide between headteacher posts and others. Compared to heads, classroom teachers have less variety in their work, no control over other teachers and less opportunity for individual initiative beyond the classroom. Their positions are best located in the lower primary sector of the labour market.

### Internal Labour Markets in Primary Teaching

There are certain gender-specific characteristics of the junior and infant (in contrast to secondary) teaching labour force that have consequences for the internal labour market and promotion prospects. First, women teachers outnumber men. According to national statistics (DES, 1985), 78 per cent of teachers in maintained primary, junior and infant schools in England and Wales are women. A second characteristic of the primary, junior and infant teaching labour force is the ready availability of part-time and supply work. There are local variations in the opportunities for part-time teaching posts but there has been a more or less constant pool of supply work, in general taken up by married women rather than men teachers.

Also there are certain gender-specific characteristics of the upper sector of this labour market. Overall, men have a higher proportion of the headteacher positions (55 per cent) and thus predominate in the upper sector of the labour market for primary teachers. But there are further significant gender differences within the upper sector. Women predominate as heads of infant and nursery schools, while men predominate as heads of primary and junior schools. Women have a virtual monopoly of the infant headteacher position. There are more separate infant schools than junior

and primary schools. But because infant schools are smaller and their pupils necessarily younger, and because of the operation of the unit total system<sup>3</sup>, these (female) infant heads are less well paid than most heads of junior and primary schools.

## THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INTERNAL LABOUR MARKET FOR PRIMARY TEACHERS

So what are the important characteristics of the internal labour market for teachers in the primary school sector? What ideologies underpin the market? What attributes are necessary for promotion from the lower to the upper sectors of the internal labour market and do such attributes affect men and women teachers equally? Finally, how are the mechanisms of the internal labour market modified under different external conditions of expansion or contraction? In order to approach such questions, the remainder of the article discusses the characteristics and processes that operate in the internal labour market of primary teaching.

### Beliefs About Promotion in Primary Teaching

#### Individual Striving

The first characteristic to consider are the various beliefs surrounding promotion in teaching and how such beliefs actually bring about acceptance of unequal opportunities. Crompton and Jones (1984) examined three organisations (banking, insurance and local government) to investigate differences in the characteristics of their internal labour markets. But there were common features as well. All three internal labour markets achieved control through compliance because employees were engaged in individualistic striving within the organisation. Similarly for primary teachers, both men and women, the ideology is individualistic

with an emphasis on equal opportunity and promotion for special merit and for taking on additional responsibilities. The belief system that supports the internal labour market of primary teaching involves the idea that men and women primary teachers begin their teaching careers with similar sorts of qualifications, attitudes and ambitions. Among young primary teachers, both men and women are thought to want interesting work, enjoy classroom contact with children, and have ambitions for more responsibility and for a career.

As careers progress, an ideology of equal opportunity is sustained, despite the fact that men generally do better in promotional terms. Gender differences in career achievement are accommodated by invocations of the effect that family responsibilities have on women's attitudes. Both men and women primary teachers explain the gender inequalities in promotion by claiming that older married women teachers are resigned to their dual family and work responsibilities and are unwilling to take on extra teaching duties because of family commitments.

The belief that individualistic striving for promotion positions explains differential career achievements is widely held in primary teaching as well as in other white collar occupations. The biographies of the headteachers in my study to an extent confirm the presence of such an ideology. For most of these women (although not all) their careers were not developed until their family responsibilities began to ease. However, a teaching career was important to them and although they might attribute their own career success to chance or luck, nevertheless the stereotype of the belief system does not adequately explain the variation and variety these headteachers showed in their career attitudes.

The Compatibility Between Women Teachers and Young Children

The primary teaching labour market shares such sustaining

ideological components as individualistic striving with other white collar occupations, but there are additional components in primary teaching that need to be elucidated. Perhaps of most significance is the idea that women are better than men at teaching very young children. The teaching of the very young, nursery and infant children, is almost exclusively female. There are promotion opportunities for women in infant education and most heads of separate infant schools are female. Some of the women in my study had moved to infant education from other sectors specifically to achieve a headship post. This aspect of the ideology that sustains the internal teaching labour market reflects the general belief that women as mothers are the most appropriate carers and educators of young children. Women heads of infant schools can continue to see themselves as primarily mother-figures, as unambitious, as not competing against men, in such roles. Some of the heads in my study espoused such a view of themselves. They were ambivalent about their career successes; their family accomplishments were as important to them.

However, this was not the case with all the women heads I interviewed. Several heads gave examples of discrimination, particularly in the 1960s, when women were encouraged to apply and were selected for the headships of infant schools but were discouraged from competing for the more prestigious and higher paid junior and primary school headships. Apparently it was felt by appointing committees that women would find it more difficult to handle the 'older' (up to age eleven) boys! The women heads reported changes in the 1970s but clearly some selectors (and some women themselves) remain unconvinced, given the continued gender differentiation in this respect.

One consequence of the beliefs about women's suitability for teaching young children is that the typical career route to a primary headship is different for women and men. The women primary heads in my



study had moved to primary headships following successful infant headships or after holding posts as heads of small village primary schools. This was the case whatever age group the woman had been trained to teach and had, in fact, been teaching. The route via an infant headship is not a career route that men can follow. Successful men will proceed directly to junior or primary headships from deputy headships or classroom teaching.

The general belief in individualistic striving and the more specific belief in the gender appropriateness of certain teaching roles constitute the ideology that shapes the promotional opportunities within primary teaching. It is necessary also to specify the qualities and characteristics the internal labour market requires as qualifications for promotion into the upper sector, the headteacher position.

### Qualifications for Promotion

#### Geographical Mobility

Occupations vary in the extent to which promotion is indeed internal in geographical and/or job terms (Crompton and Jones, 1984). Primary teaching does constitute a stratified internal labour market at the local education authority level. None of the women heads that I interviewed had achieved any of their promotions out of the county in which they were currently employed; indeed many of the heads had taught in only one administrative area of the county (Evetts, 1987). This finding suggests that the internal labour market of primary teaching for women is defined and specified according to local educational authority boundaries and may even be constricted further to operate within administrative areas or districts within those boundaries. How the market is defined for men primary teachers cannot be ascertained from my research. It is possible only to hypothesize that it will be similarly local, for the most part,



although men primary teachers will be more likely to have the option of moving to a different LEA in order to advance their career prospects should this prove necessary.

In certain internal labour markets employees are required to be geographically mobile, usually to gain experience in various branches/establishments, in order to work their way up the promotion hierarchy. Crompton and Jones (1984) indicated that there will be important differences between the operation of internal labour markets according to whether employees have to operate with an 'occupational' career strategy (moving from employer to employer) or with an 'organisational' career strategy (where advancement can be sought within an employing organisation). (This distinction was developed in Brown, 1982). Clearly primary, junior and infant teaching is complex in this respect. Primary teachers need to develop an organisational career strategy in that promotion is sought within an employing educational authority. But educational administrators claim the desirability of experience in a range of schools. This aim is not necessarily achieved in practice, however.

In general, married women primary teachers are not as mobile as men primary teachers. Few married women will be willing or able to move their families to develop their own careers. Nevertheless for the women heads that I studied, lack of geographical mobility did not seem to have been a handicap, especially in achieving an infant headship. Indeed, stability seems to have been a characteristic that helped these women advance their careers. Of those teachers who had been geographically mobile early on (in pursuit of their husbands' careers), promotions did not begin until they were able to become established and to get themselves known in an area. For men primary teachers, family constraints are probably less prominent. Geographical mobility may be a significant gender difference,

therefore, in the career strategies of men and women primary teachers.

### Continuous Service

Another usually important characteristic for promotion into the upper sector of internal labour markets is continuous, unbroken service. The ability to work continuously differentiates the working careers of men from those of most married women in many occupations, including primary teaching. The National Union of Teachers has estimated that approximately 65-70% of the female teaching population (both primary and secondary) eventually break their service (NUT, 1980). Some women (and some men) break their teaching service for reasons other than childcare, but it is this break that is by far the most significant for women. Out of my twenty-five primary and infant headteachers, fifteen had broken their teaching service. Of the other ten, one had been a late entrant to teaching, eight had had no children and one had continued to teach without a break.

The women heads in my study who had broken their teaching service were not out of teaching for long periods, nor did most experience these periods of time at home as real interruptions in their careers (Evetts, 1988a). The 'breaks' for this group ranged from eighteen months to eight years. But if part-time and supply teaching are calculated as the equivalent of half a years service, then the large majority of this group was out of teaching for under three years. Most of these women had kept in touch with teaching either through intermittent supply work or through more regular part-time teaching, or at the very least, through experience of setting up and assisting with play groups. One important consequence of this kind of incomplete break was that these women were not anxious about their abilities to do the teaching job upon return.

The internal labour market for primary teachers might be unusual,

therefore, in that continuous service is not a prerequisite for promotion into the upper sector for women teachers. Clearly a break in service might explain some of the gender differences in achievement of headteacher posts. But a break, particularly if it is short and incomplete, does not always stop women achieving promotion posts in primary and infant teaching. Certain features of the teaching labour market, such as the availability of part-time and of supply work, allow women to maintain contact with their teaching work while they are at home working as housewife/mothers. The availability of part-time and supply work for married women primary and infant teachers might distinguish the primary teaching labour market from other professional and semi-professional occupations. Moreover, in the primary teaching labour market a break in service and the manner of the subsequent return (for example, when women are sought out and their returns encouraged) might have positive career implications. Certainly for the women in my study, the break in service increased their self confidence. Their experiences at home had added to their understanding of the needs and capabilities of young children and had increased their confidence in their interactions with parents and with teaching colleagues. However, such positive implications of a break in service might be a unique feature of the primary teaching labour market.

### Post Entry Qualifications

Crompton and Jones (1984) identified considerable variations among their three organisations in the extent to which post-entry qualifications were essential for promotion. In primary teaching, the precise significance of post-entry qualifications is difficult to specify categorically. For current headteacher post holders, both men and women, there seems to have been no necessity to acquire additional qualifications (Evetts, 1986). Similarly in the interview research, of the twenty-five women primary and

infant heads, seven had gained an additional post-entry qualification (three had achieved an in-service BEd, one had an Open University BA degree and three had acquired advanced diplomas in education). But most of these post-entry qualifications were not undertaken with promotion in mind and most were achieved after the women had gained their headteacher positions. The heads claimed they were undertaken in order to up-date knowledge. However, there was a feeling amongst some of the headteachers that since the teaching certificate had been down-graded by its replacement with the BEd degree for all new entrants, qualifications would become increasingly important in future in the promotions race.

For the heads I interviewed, length of experience and satisfactory teaching service (particularly if this had been noted by significant authority figures) had been sufficient for seeking promotion in the internal labour market. But there are signs that in the future post-entry qualifications might become an increasingly important way of getting oneself known as wanting promotion and an increasingly necessary requirement for headteacher posts, for both men and women.

### Promotion Processes

So far I have discussed some ideologies that support the internal teacher labour market and certain qualities which are thought to influence promotion prospects. Primary teaching shares certain of these characteristics with other white collar and professional occupations while other features are peculiar to the internal labour market for primary teachers. Next, I want to consider two processes - sponsorship and the operation of an occupational community - which regulate access to promotion opportunities in the internal labour market of primary teaching. Other occupations might share certain features of these processes. In



respect of primary teaching, these processes became apparent from my research into the headteachers career histories.

## Sponsorship

The belief in individualistic striving and meritocracy within the teaching profession, namely that promotion does not come automatically with age and length of service but rather that promotion has to be applied for and is the reward for merit, for ability and for taking on additional responsibilities, has already been discussed. What remains to be examined is how, in primary teaching, such promotional qualities are identified and how individuals are sponsored by 'gatekeepers' (Lyons, 1981). In internal labour markets, some individuals are recognised and encouraged to go for promotion whereas others are not so identified, have to motivate themselves and even then may find it difficult to achieve a promotion post. The internal labour market model itself gives no indication of how promotable characteristics come to be identified and how the individuals who possess such characteristics are encouraged and backed in their attempts to secure promotion.

Headteachers are one such source of sponsorship. Giving encouragement to apply for promotion is clearly different from having the power actually to allocate promotion posts. But heads can and do apply for scale promotions (now incentive allowances) for individual teachers, although the advertising, application and selection procedures for deputy head and headteacher positions are rather more formalised. Inspectors and advisers also practice sponsorship. Winkley (1985) has suggested that inspector/advisers have more influence over career prospects in primary than in secondary schools. He claims that inspector/advisers "define as tightly as possible the rules under which teachers may be short-listed for jobs. The inspectorate may, for example, insist on forming the short-



list. There are L.E.A.'s where it is the inspector and not the head of the school who makes the final decision as to who should be appointed" (Winkley, 1985, p. 113). Clearly there are also cases where heads and inspectors work closely together to determine appointments and promotions. Generally speaking, then, in the teacher labour market within local education authorities, there are important links between heads, inspectors and teachers and these links seem particularly important for promotion prospects in primary education.

It is necessary also to consider whether there are differences between men and women primary headteachers in the process by which they become career ambitious. Elsewhere (Evetts, 1987) I have described the part played by 'gatekeepers' in motivating the women heads that I studied to seek promotion. The women heads frequently mentioned the influence of inspectors and of their own headteachers in giving the initial push and guiding the teachers into appropriate courses of action. Although not all of the women heads attributed their career success to the initial encouragement of such 'gatekeepers'; some were clearly self-motivated; nevertheless such sponsorship was important to the women I studied.

It is possible, therefore, that teachers who wait to be sponsored for such internal promotions such as incentive allowances (women more than men?) are likely to take longer to achieve initial career promotions than those who motivate and push themselves. This, together with any differential support given to women and men by 'gatekeepers', means that gender differences in the origins of career ambition could have important consequences for the numbers of men and women in headteacher posts.

### Occupational Communities

A related factor that seemed to be important for promotion for the women heads and which became apparent in their career history accounts was

membership of an occupational community or teacher network. There was a very real sense of community amongst these women that had existed when as teacher-mothers they had shared difficulties, experiences and solutions with other women teachers and with their own headteachers. This sense of community continued when, as headteachers themselves, they tried to assist their own women staff to work out compromises in their teaching and in their family responsibilities (Evetts, 1988b). The concept of 'occupational community' has been used to refer to instances where various characteristics of the man's work have resulted in the formation of a community of families who live together in a relatively isolated residential location and who share a common life style, common values and so on. The necessity of a common residential location as a characteristic of an occupational community has been challenged by Salaman (1974). It is highly likely that communities which develop in connection with female occupations will have rather different sorts of characteristics. These women did not live in the same geographical area; their husbands had different kinds of occupation and, to that extent, their life styles varied. However, there was a strong sense of shared identity and there was considerable fellow-feeling amongst these women facing conflicting demands on their time and energy. They had similar sets of (family and teaching) obligations; there was broad agreement concerning the expectations they set themselves; they had experienced common problems and difficulties; and they pulled together to fulfil the tasks and to share solutions that had worked. Out of necessity, women teachers in primary education had worked, cooperated and supported each other in diverse ways.

The implications of this female teaching community for promotional opportunities in the internal labour market are many. Where married women, as heads, have achieved a measure of control over the scale

promotions (incentive allowances) of their staff and their resources in schools, then manoeuvrability, cooperation, assistance and mutual support could be maximised. In such a situation, there are more opportunities for heads to take decisions and make arrangements with women teachers' career and family obligations and career strategies in mind. The consequences for men primary teachers are perhaps rather different. But men teachers have for a long time benefited from the operation of gender-specific promotional networks.

Following the identification of these two processes in the internal labour market of primary teaching, it is possible to indicate further promotion-related characteristics which become apparent from career history research data and are additional to those Crompton and Jones have described for other white collar workers. These additional characteristics arise out of and are related to the presence of an occupational community in primary teaching. They are also explained by the existence of close ties between management and classroom practitioners in primary teaching whereby it is possible for heads and inspectors to sponsor and encourage certain teachers in the competition for promotion. These additional characteristics seemed to work in a number of different ways. But in order to trigger the sponsorship and community networks, it was necessary for individuals to display the following sorts of attributes: an ability to get oneself known in the local educational area through special teaching achievements and/or through attendance and prominence at in-service courses; a willingness to take on extra responsibilities in school and to show leadership qualities particularly in times of crisis; an educational philosophy and pedagogical practices that accord with the headteacher's and are currently in favour at the local authority inspector/adviser level; a familiarity with innovative schemes. In addition, it is important to emphasize tenacity and a willingness to put



oneself forward for promotion and to continue to apply for promotion posts even following rejections.

In the past, both the general characteristics and the features specific to the primary teaching labour market have seemed to favour men teachers for promotion posts although women have always succeeded in achieving the headships of infant schools. Thus gender has been a significant factor in the internal labour market of primary teaching. However, if more women achieve the headships of junior and primary schools, in addition to the headships of infant schools, then there will be more opportunity for the teacher-community and sponsorship features of primary education to work in women's favour.

## CONCLUSION

I have been concerned to demonstrate the characteristics and processes that operate in the internal labour market of primary teaching to manage and control promotional opportunities into the upper sector of the labour market. In conclusion, it is necessary to consider how the characteristics of the internal labour market are modified under different external conditions of expansion or contraction. This will help to demonstrate how the gap that exists between interactionist concepts and macro contexts can be filled by the notion of an internal labour market. It is important to note that the characteristics identified as significant for promotion success will be applied differently in times of teacher shortage and in times of plentiful teacher supply. In the former case, preferences for geographical stability, continuous service and post-entry qualifications can be relaxed (as in the 1950s and 1960s) and teachers who do not meet such criteria might nevertheless be promoted. But when there is educational contraction and a ready supply of teachers (as in the 1980s) these characteristics can form the basis for selection.

The teaching community and sponsorship mechanisms of primary education will also serve different purposes in times of teacher shortage and teacher abundance. When there is a shortage of teachers, the occupational community can work to bring women teachers back into teaching and to assist them in devising and negotiating family and teaching strategies; the sponsorship mechanisms can operate to encourage both men and women teachers to apply for promotion and to succeed. On the other hand, when there is a plentiful supply of teachers and of applicants for promotion posts then there will be fewer opportunities for the community of women teachers to support individual members in their attempts to resolve pressing family and teaching dilemmas. But the sponsorship mechanisms continue to operate. In the tighter economic and educational climate of the 1980s and 1990s, when there are fewer promotion posts and less movement generally within the teaching profession, it is probable that only those with continuous (or almost continuous) teaching service, with post-entry qualifications and with strong local links and connections will be sponsored for promotion.

The concept of an internal labour market can assist our understanding, therefore, of how external structural conditions are mediated in occupations and come to influence the lives and careers of individual teachers. By examining the detailed processes whereby certain individuals or categories of individuals are identified, encouraged or even sponsored for promotion, we can appreciate how professional occupations vary in the operation of their internal labour markets. Perhaps even more important, we will learn how different external conditions of expansion or contraction are worked out in particular occupational groups. Conditions for promotion depend on a range of factors (both internal and external to the occupation) and these factors are outside the control of any particular individual, whatever their



attitude to career.

Nevertheless the strengths of life and career history research are many. Through such research we can understand the detail of how external structural factors and internal labour market processes are worked out in a variety of individual careers. Such detailed accounts help to develop, expand and refine more general explanations at the structural level of analysis. Thus career history research needs to be accommodated within wider explanations of structural factors and their effects. Analysis of internal labour markets is a way of profitably integrating the two levels of analysis.

The interview material was done with the help of a small grant from the Nottingham University Research Fund.

2. An attempt will be made to avoid the potential confusion here between 'the primary sector of the labour market' and 'the primary sector of education' by using the terms in italics where necessary.
3. The criteria for determining the responsibilities and the salaries of headteachers of schools of varying sizes and for deciding the number and types of promotion posts available in a school, are the number and age of pupils on roll. These are condensed into one basic operating principle called the 'unit total'. See Hixson and Start, 1974, p. 207 and for the latest up-date see CBE, 1983, p. 22.

## NOTES

1. The sample consisted of 1 in 2 of the women primary and infant heads in the city area of the county who had been 'once married' and 2 in 3 of the 'once married' women heads from another, generally more rural, county area. The headteachers' names and school addresses were obtained from the local education authority and they were contacted initially by a letter asking if they would be willing to take part in the research. All but two headteachers agreed. The transcribing of some of the interview material was done with the help of a small grant from the Nottingham University Research Fund.
2. An attempt will be made to avoid the potential confusion here between 'the primary sector of the labour market' and 'the primary sector of education' by using the terms in full where necessary.
3. The criteria for determining the responsibilities and the salaries of headteachers of schools of varying sizes and for deciding the number and types of promotion posts available in a school, are the number and age of pupils on roll. These are compounded into one basic operating principle called the 'unit total'. See Hilsum and Start, 1974, p. 307 and for the latest up-date see DES, 1987, p. 28.

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## 6. Married Women and Career

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## MARRIED WOMEN AND CAREER: Career History Accounts of Primary Headteachers

Life history accounts and biographies are becoming an increasingly popular source of sociological data (Faraday and Plummer, 1979; Goodson, 1981; Bertaux, 1981). Indeed Plummer (1983) has argued that in sociology, research which highlights the actual human subject must provide the necessary counterbalance to positivistic emphases on structures and systems. However, questions continue to be asked about the value of such accounts in respect of how far life histories can contribute to more general sociological understanding. In particular, how can the detail of individual experiences assist in the expansion and development of the conceptual tools necessary for explanation?

In research on teachers and teachers' careers, John Beynon (in Ball and Goodson 1985) has claimed that the life history method can fill in huge gaps in our understanding of career, professional and personal lives. He claims that life histories can explore and build up sensitizing hypotheses and concepts and that such data can correct, test and extend existing theory. This paper will consider the potential of life history accounts in contributing to our understanding about women teachers' careers. The case will be made that career histories can assist in the understanding of the linkages between different levels of analysis. The paper will consider how individual women experienced their careers; how they negotiated a hierarchical career structure in a time of professional expansion and how they managed the constraints and opportunities that characterize the primary teaching labour market. I will argue that in order to develop a theory of career that has explanatory power, it is necessary to understand what 'having a career' means to the individuals involved.

## Married Women Primary Headteachers

For the past three years, I have been engaged in career history research into the experiences of teaching work of a group of married women primary<sup>1</sup> and infant headteachers (principals). The women had at some stage in their lives opted for and been successful in achieving promotion in primary teaching in addition to having and managing family responsibilities.

Twenty-five women were interviewed. All were headteachers of primary and infant schools from two educational areas (one city, one more rural) of a Midlands county. All the women were or had been married although it was not possible to know their current marital status in advance of the interviews. Neither was it possible to know the extent of their family commitments; in particular, whether they had or did not have children. In fact, seventeen of the twenty-five had had children of their own.

The initial interviews were tape-recorded and took place either in the women's homes or in their offices in schools at the end of the school day. These interviews lasted between two and four hours and provided the bulk of the career history data. It is important to explain how the manner and the conduct of the interviews influenced the subsequent organisation and analysis of the career history material. I began the interviews with a check-list of topics to be covered which included the women's career routes, time-scales and personal events. However, the opportunity for open-ended responses, the informality of the occasion and the conversational manner of the interviews resulted in the women themselves choosing what to emphasize and develop. The respondents guided me away from the idea of a model of career which involved a successive sequence of posts and positions, increasing in responsibility and salary,

regularly over a period of time. These women related their career experiences more as wide-ranging and complex interrelationships of factors and events that were sometimes planned and anticipated but, as often, were confronted, negotiated and managed as and when they occurred. The women emphasized the importance of external conditions of professional expansion and of high demand for their expertise. They talked of changes to the career promotions structure which occurred during the course of their teaching work. They described certain characteristics and processes that were peculiar to their work as teachers of young children and which acted sometimes as constraints and sometimes as opportunities in the conduct of their working lives. And they talked of their own strategies and of the ways they had coped with personal events and with career responsibilities.

Thus the informality in the conduct of the interviews enabled these women to relate their 'subjective careers'. Woods (1983) has claimed that subjective careers are "the moving perspective in which the person sees his life as a whole and interprets the meaning of his various attributes, actions and the things which happen to him" (Hughes, 1937, p 409 quoted in Woods, 1983, p 13). The subject career offers a way of linking the experiences of individuals (teachers) with wider external conditions and with the profession-specific career structure of promotion posts and positions. But the subjective career is not necessarily a smooth unilinear model of promotion and progress. Nias (1980, 1981) has demonstrated different kinds of commitment, motivation and job-satisfaction among primary school teachers. Nor does the subjective career have to be centred solely on developments in the work sphere. As Sikes et al explain (1985, p. 2): "the adult career is usually the product of a dialectical relationship between self and circumstances. As a result of meeting new circumstances, certain interests may be reformulated, certain aspects of the self changed or crystallized, and, in



consequence, new directions envisaged". Thus, the subjective career enables us to understand the influences that are important to individuals in the development of their working and their personal lives.

The career history extracts which appear in this paper, represent and demonstrate the great variation and variety in attitudes to work and career even among these women who had all achieved promotion to a headteacher post. Of particular importance are the variations in the extent of career ambition; in the routes and the time taken to achieve a headship post; in spouse relationships; and in attitudes to motherhood. The extracts, which are transcriptions from the career history interviews, are used to illustrate and to substantiate the interpretations that I make from the data. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) have argued that research of this kind needs to be well-documented with description from data in order to enable readers to assess the interpretations that are being made. But also they claim that quoting the subjects "helps (the) reader get closer to the people studied. The quotations not only tell what they said, but how they said it and what they are like" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982, p. 177). With these objectives in mind, my observations appear at the beginnings and at the ends of their accounts. This is in order to let the women themselves speak and in addition to enable readers to feel that they begin to know the women. The extracts illustrate some of the critical differences in the women's experiences of career. It is necessary, therefore to consider what can be learned about the way individual women seek to achieve balances in the sometimes competing demands of personal life and career. But prior to this, it is important to take note of how the women perceived of the wider structural factors, of external conditions, of promotion chances, and of the characteristics of constraint and opportunity in the working culture of the primary teaching labour market.

## Labour Market Conditions

From the headteachers' accounts<sup>2</sup>, it became clear that external conditions had appeared favourable for these women. There was a shortage of and high demand for primary and particularly infant teachers in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s. These women were also convinced that this had meant improved opportunities for promotion for women in primary and infant teaching. In addition, the women's accounts demonstrate that there are certain features of the primary teaching labour market and of primary and infant teaching work which have important consequences for the careers of women teachers. The internal labour market for primary teachers has been discussed elsewhere (Acker, forthcoming). The most important characteristics, as perceived by these women, would seem to be: the compatibility of teachers' hours of work and holidays with those of their children at school; the availability of part-time and supply work and the mechanisms whereby such posts are filled; the virtual female monopoly of the headships of infant schools; and the informality in the control of promotion opportunities.

### Mrs. Tanner

(Head of Infant and Nursery School.

Age 55; married to headteacher of Primary School  
with one son. First headship age 33).

(After my first year) I went to a new school. In the first year I'd had three different heads. This new school had only been opened a year and had a head with a reputation of being very hard to work for and hardly anybody liked her. I thought she was fabulous. She really trained me. I owe a lot of what I've done to her. I learned a great deal. I got married while I was there and was expecting my son while I was there. I intended to return straight away because I loved it. Then when my son was born I didn't want to go back. I wanted to be with him. I actually had about eighteen months off. The reason I went back, apart from it being nice to earn some money, was that they had been calling me out to help almost from the first September after he was born. Teachers were in short supply and I kept getting messages from my friends who by that time were perhaps deputies and people I had been friendly with at the school. First it was my friend who rang me - they'd got three staff off and could I possibly go and help. I said to my mum and she said she'd look after him



while you go back for two or three days. I really enjoyed it. The money was superb - I remember buying my son a dog-walker. And then they rang again and again and again. And then they wanted me to go and work at (a school some distance away) for a whole term. I wasn't signed on for supply work they just called you out.

So my mother and I talked it over. I might as well go back full-time so that I know where I am. I find it very difficult to go where I don't know people. So I didn't really like going to these different schools just for a few days and not really knowing anybody.

So we decided I would go back. I rang the school where I had been before and said I could come back in September, do you want me? But she already had somebody appointed. I rang the office and said I'm prepared to come back in September - that was what it was like then - but I would like to be at (my former school). They said OK. We both arrived on that first day and the other teacher was sent elsewhere. I didn't know that girl had been appointed. It wasn't until I got back that first morning that I heard the story.

Anyway, I hadn't been back long when the Head said to me, "Are you going to stop here or are you going to think of promotion?" It wasn't until she said that to me that it ever entered my head. I was happy; I loved it there. Then, the first post that came up was deputy in our own school. One of the other teachers was applying and I thought if she can apply, I can. So we did. It must have created terrible problems. Anyway they didn't appoint. They readvertised, we reapplied and they appointed someone from outside. Very sensible. Meanwhile there are other jobs coming up. So I'm on the bandwagon then. Eventually (two years after my return) I got a deputy headship at what was this school, only it was (the old school). I was deputy head for five years. Then I became head at (another infant school). I was there for four years and then I came back to the old school here, as head. This new building opened (some thirteen years ago).

The 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s were a period of teacher shortage in primary schools and particularly in infant schools. The women heads who had broken their teaching service to have and to care for their own children were encouraged to return to teaching; often they were sought out. Their returns were facilitated and they could even negotiate over schools to return to. Thus, in a time of teacher shortage, certain features of the primary teaching labour market became important influences in individual women's decisions to return. The informality of headteacher-teacher and teacher colleague relationships operated to encourage women teachers to return; some women were approached and invited to return to teaching. Some women made use of wider family relationships

for their childcare provision. But other women had made use of the availability of nursery facilities in infant and primary schools and the local authority provisions which permitted women teachers to enroll their young children in the schools where they themselves worked. By such means, women's childcare responsibilities could more easily be fitted in with their teaching work. Such facilities in the teaching labour market were seen by the women heads to have been very important in their decisions to return early to their teaching work.

Mrs Ellis (Head of Infants School. Age 50; married to headteacher of Primary School; two children. First headship age 35)

(When I returned to teaching, my daughter) was three-and-a-bit. I enjoyed being at home with the children and talking with them and making the most of my time with them. But I got very frustrated. I thought I wasn't really doing anything with my life and I felt I could do such a lot more. Which is why, when I went back, I deliberately opted to go into infant education because I could fit it into the scheme of things and I also saw a future in infant education where I could get on fairly rapidly; so I suppose I was an opportunist in that respect. I also saw that the children could fit into the situation when I went back to a school where there was a nursery and they could go along and it worked very well because they had access to me if they needed me and vice versa. It was as ideal to me as it could be.

Interviewer: How did you get back into teaching?

Mrs Ellis:

It's quite interesting because I was shopping in ..... and I met a girl who had been in the year above me at college and by that time she had just been appointed as the head of an infants school and she said "Oh, do you want to come back we need good teachers". So I said "Well I was thinking about coming back to infants". So she said "Go in and see the inspector". So I went in with the kids and said "Look I'd like to come back but I can't conceive a full time, coming back full time at the moment I don't think I can cope with that". So they said "Well how would you like to do it?". So I did three days at first, and the children were then looked after by a neighbour while I did three days, I think that was it. But I soon got into the state where I couldn't stand the fact that somebody else had the class for two days, and disrupting things I'd been doing and soon got into full time again and the children were in the nursery of the school. And it so happened that they put me into the school where this person was the head and eighteen months later I got the deputy headship in that school.

Then, after one year, I left to take the headship of ..... Infants. I was there for two-and-a-half years then I left to take on the headship

of ..... Infants, where I still am.

So I got my first headship two and a half years after I returned to teaching.

Eventually, we moved (my son and daughter) to another infants school so that they were with children who were in their locality, because the school that I was teaching at wasn't in our immediate neighbourhood. We thought that it was better for them that they should have their friends at school as they were going to get when they got home. And it all worked very well because I got good co-operation from the teaching staff there, you know, who would have (my son and daughter) in their room until I got there and things like that you know.

Interviewer: So their teachers kept them in school until you arrived?

Mrs Ellis:

One of the teachers did yes. I mean I was never very late because I always took the attitude that while I was in school I would give everything to school. But the moment school was over, it was my family commitment time and I would rush off to my family, and work through my lunch hour to do this, to justify it.

The compatibility of teachers' hours of work and holidays with those of their children at school is usually seen as a benefit that attaches to teaching as a job of work for women. This was perceived as an advantage by these women although the compatibility of teaching hours with children's school hours was not as convenient as is usually assumed. Unless women teachers enrolled their own children in the schools where they themselves worked, then the necessity of travelling meant that arrangements for meeting children still had to be made, and such arrangements were often highly complex. However, when their own children were young, these teacher-mothers could arrive early at their work and could work through their lunch hours to enable them to leave their schools promptly at the end of the working day.

An associated characteristic of the teaching labour market of particular importance to women is the ready availability of part-time and supply work. This is of crucial importance to women with family responsibilities, particularly if they are unsure of their abilities to



cope with both teaching and family expectations. The opportunity to be flexible and the ability to negotiate teaching commitments and family responsibilities was perceived to be very important by the women headteachers. And in the 1950s and 1960s, when particularly infant teachers were in very high demand, the flexibility of part-time and supply work encouraged women to return and return earlier to their teaching work.

In addition to the availability of part-time posts and supply work, primarily for women, in the teaching labour market, it is also necessary to consider the mechanisms whereby such posts are filled. Informality is an important feature. Thus, headteachers have and prefer to use their own lists of supply teachers, of women who are ready and usually able to fill in at short notice in times of staff absences. Similarly, part-time posts are usually occupied by former full-time staff who have left their posts (say to have a family) and are happy to teach part-time in their former schools, to fit in with their family responsibilities. Thus, such informality in the filling of such posts is an important feature of the teaching labour market, for women teachers.

A further characteristic of the primary teaching labour market is the virtual female monopoly of the headships of separate infant schools. The women heads clearly perceived this as an opportunity in that some moved to infant education from other sectors as it was widely recognised to be easier for women to achieve infant headship posts. But also, such a monopoly was seen as a constraint on women's opportunities to achieve primary (or separate junior) headships.

A final feature of the primary teaching labour market which seemed of particular importance from the women's accounts was the encouragement and even sponsorship that some women had received in their careers from their own headteachers and/or inspector/advisers.

Mrs. Pointer: (Teaching-head of small rural primary school.  
Age 48; married to teacher in Special Education;  
two children. First headship age 44; currently  
in same post.)

(When teaching at the school her children were attending) I was so pleased that I'd got a job that enabled me to go to school and not neglect my children because they were coming home with me each night. Promotion never entered my head at all and it was only because that scale post cropped up in that school. You see, now scale posts would have to be advertised all the time. But then the head decided that if I carried on as I was, as a class teacher, that he was going to give me the scale post. He announced it at a staff meeting. He talked to me about it first and said did I feel that even if it meant doing extra work at home and I said that as long as you're satisfied that a lot of the extra work would be done at home while my children are still at primary school. When it was the odd course after school I was always able to arrange with a friend that they went to play. It wasn't very often and he discussed it with me and said he would like me to do it. So he just announced it at the staff meeting that I was offered it. Well, I mean they couldn't do that now. But that was the system you see. I don't think I would have applied for promotion if it hadn't been in the school and that it just fell in my path really.

Interviewer: What about the deputy headship?

Mrs Pointer:

I began to feel a little bit that either I had to stay at that school for always or that was the time to start looking for a move. When I looked through the advertisements - I did not do it every Monday thinking I must grab that because I must get out, because I was really happy there you know. I just casually looked at things that I thought it would be worth me applying for. Then one day this was advertised. It was a small village school; it was still within travelling distance from my home and by this time my daughter had now gone to secondary school and so they were going to be coming home later. And the post was for middle juniors; it was for games which has been one of my specialist subjects and country dancing and it was to help them to develop language curriculum and that's what I'd had my post for. It was just as if it was heaven-sent and I looked at it and thought well if I look for all the years that I've got left in my life I will never find anything that fits so much what I'm already doing and that I could extend and so I just put in an application and it happened.

Interviewer: Had you applied for other deputy headships?

Mrs Pointer:

No. That was the first one; the only one and I got it. Then, when the head retired, I applied for the headship because it didn't seem sensible not to have a go. The head encouraged me to apply. He said you have watched me work and you could do this work and also, as you will know, as a deputy you support the head to such an extent that things like outings, games, all this kind of thing I had organised and so the parents got to know me very well. He said that several parents had said that they hoped that it works that Mrs Pointer can get promotion. The authority were



not 100% happy, because it really isn't policy. But you see we're an aided school and the Governors have quite a say and although the authority were involved in the interview I don't know whether the authority voted for me or not but they were obviously not strongly enough against it at the interview because the governors decided along with an educationalist and the diocese education chief after the interview that they would offer it to me. There were five of us interviewed, so it was just lucky.

Interviewer: And, again, it was the only Headship you applied for, there were no others?

Mrs Pointer: No.

Thus, some women, though not all, had been given guidance and certain posts had been recommended as staging posts in the career (see Mrs. Grant, later). Such informality in the control and operation of promotion opportunities is an important characteristic of the primary teaching labour market, probably for men as well as for women teachers.

Analysis of the women headteachers' career histories can give some insight, therefore, into the characteristics of labour markets and of how these are made use of, accommodated or negotiated by individual women, depending on their personal circumstances and situations and on their attitudes to promotion and to career.

#### Variations in Attitudes to Career

The variety in the ways in which the women regarded the promotion they had achieved in their teaching careers can be illustrated in the women's attitudes to ambition. Some of the women were ambitious early in their careers. Their promotions were achieved in regular and successive stages. They achieved their first headship posts early and intended to go further. They were proud of their career accomplishments and they openly acknowledged their career ambitions. In some cases the increased control and responsibility gained in teaching work could help to outweigh any disappointments experienced in personal lives.

Mrs. Williams (Age 37; divorced and living with another partner. No children. First headship at age 31. Currently head of infants school).

I was qualified in 1969 and in my first year I worked in ..... in London. At the end of that year we got married and went to America. I couldn't get a teaching post there and things went wrong with my husband's course so by Christmas we came back to England. We went to live with his parents and I got a job teaching at the local school. I taught there from January to July, whereupon we moved to ..... (current Midlands town). I went to a school in ....., a primary school where I taught infants. I was there three years. After one year I got a scale two, then I got a scale three. Then I got a deputy headship at a school in the city. I was there for five years. Then I came here as head six years ago.

Interviewer: Had you tried for any other headships before you got this one?

Mrs. Williams:

No. This was the first one and I got it. I will eventually look for a larger school, a primary school, I expect. There was one recently that tempted me which I didn't pursue because this term wasn't the right term. I had other things on my mind. And it was a larger school with extra responsibilities and exactly the same salary. So I decided not to.

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Interviewer: Was it your choice not to have children?

Mrs. Williams:

It was through career really. I didn't have time for children. And through things going wrong early on. (Divorced after four years marriage.) I mean everything sort of went disastrously wrong. But I got too involved in my career to think of having time off for children ... I've never wanted children. I just don't think I could cope with career and children personally speaking.

A lot of people I talk to who have what they call a job of work, go in and they do the job and come out again and that's the end of the matter. They say to me we don't understand why you've always got stacks of work or why you're still thinking about it and talking about it or going on weekend courses. I feel it's a career and it's a profession because it isn't a nine to five job. There's a lot more to it and I suppose you could make it what it is. But to me that's what a career is. And also it's been structured. I've gone up through it through stages, with varying degrees of responsibility and I feel a career involves responsibility, being responsible for other people. I suppose that's how I view a career ... I am ambitious. I have been successful and I'm proud of it. I do think that having children limits a woman's potential for a career. The women I know, all of the ones who have perhaps got stuck at a certain level. It's may be because they've left, had children, come back to work and are still having the main responsibility for children because the husband may be doing exactly the same job but isn't taking the same responsibility for the children.

I do feel perhaps I give too much time and thought to work and

perhaps I ignore aspects of my personal life which perhaps I should be giving time to. I'm very selfish about giving time to my personal life. I tend to give a lot of it to work and leave very little over for home ... I have to make myself turn off and I find it very difficult to turn off and say right now is time just to do some cooking or whatever. Often you know we might not eat a meal for days because I'm coming home and getting on with work or I'm tired out and (my partner) will be to.

I don't do much apart from work. I've been on committees to do with work but nothing apart from that.

However, unlike Mrs. Williams, most of the women were more ambivalent in their attitudes to promotion in the career and to their own ambition. Several were concerned to deny ambition and to attribute their promotion successes to luck or to being pushed by significant others. Often in such cases, the first headship post was achieved later in the career and there would be no intention of competing for further promotion, although there was a great deal of variation in this respect. For most of these women, the balancing of teaching work and family responsibilities was extremely important.

Mrs Tanner:

In my career, I have been involved in, not only educating young children but development of staff. And not only my own staff but other teachers as well. From far afield, not just locally.

Also I know I could have gone on further. But I did begin to draw the line. Maybe I could have influenced more people but then I had to think how that would affect my family. This career I can give all my attention to and still have time for my family. To do the next job properly, I would have had to give more of my family's time and I wasn't prepared to do that.

I could have applied to be an inspector, in fact was encouraged to do so on two different occasions. The first time it was a boost to the ego. I had three months of heartache, I was interested in doing the job, but something was holding me back. And, in the end, I concluded that what was holding me back was that the hours of work were different to my husband's, different to my son's at school, and was it worth it? In the end I decided not, although I did have some regret occasionally. Once I had made the decision, I put it out of my mind and it only arose occasionally. It wasn't really regret because I enjoy this. I don't enjoy standing up and talking to a hall full of people. I can do it, I don't enjoy it. I sometimes think I ought to have done more because I



would have been helping more people because of my experience ... I know that I could give more than I'm giving. Sometimes I think you ought to be doing that. People did it for you.

I could have gone into the Nursery Nurses Training College. There was an opportunity a few years back. Actually it clashed with the opening of this school and I was very torn. Then I thought do I really want to be working with teenagers? This held me back. If I go to the other fields that are open to me, I lose contact with the children. I don't know whether I'm using that as an excuse or not. But I am very happy here. I'm contented, which may be wrong.

Twice recently I've been offered secondment for a term doing nursery conversion courses and I was asked to be tutor to a group and work in liaison with the staff. I refused because I'm not certain I want to do it. Then only last week our inspectors rang to say they're doing an Infant Conversion Course next term and I was the first person they thought of to run this course. I got all excited and then I thought, you've been through all this before. You don't know how much time you're committing yourself to. I think the evening is very important to my family. Even if that is now only my husband. He's also very committed. I don't always see him every evening. But I don't know.

Then, again, my parents sometimes require help. For instance I stopped being a magistrate. I resigned because once or twice I was called out to my parents. Its choosing really; and getting your priorities right. In the end, again, I felt guilty for not carrying on. But in the end I thought that family and so on must come first. You are not going to do anything well if you try to do too much. At that stage I decided that something must go if I was going to cope with a mum who is a semi-invalid, and my father who is 80. They need support and I need to be able to be there so that if they need me, I can go. That was another reason for my decision not to go (on the conversion courses). I thought if I was due to teach a group of teachers on a one term course and if I'm not able to be there, its not being fair. Whereas somebody can fill in here, it doesn't matter if I'm not here one afternoon: the children are being taught and I can make up what I've missed.

The heads were aware that there were wider consequences to them as women as well as to them as members of households, partnerships and families from returning full-time to their teaching work and from being successful in achieving promotion in their teaching careers. Developing a career for these women meant balancing individual perceptions of achievements at work with household and family responsibilities and within the constraints and opportunities in the primary teaching labour market. Balances were achieved in different ways and balances changed over the course of a career.

Mrs. Grant:

(Head of Primary School. Age 42; married  
with one daughter. First headship age 29.  
Mrs. Grant took one year out of her college  
course to marry and have her baby.)

(While I completed my college course) my baby daughter stayed with my friend. When I went back to college, college were marvellous and I only went into college three mornings a week. So I was with my daughter most of the time. I'd do my work and my piano practice in an afternoon while she had a nap. So I saw a great deal of her, so I had almost two years with her as a mum. Then it was very tough in my first year as a probationary teacher. I didn't see a great deal of her and I think that is my biggest regret. I'd always planned to have a family and be at home until they were five and perhaps have two children and stay off until one was at school and the other at nursery, if it was ready. This was my ideal. But I wasn't able to choose. I was told I must come back and I must do my probationary year adjacent to my college course. There was no possibility of having another break until my child was old enough to cope. I found that very very difficult. I suppose I could have given up my career. But given my family background, I felt I couldn't do that. I felt a duty to my family, a duty to the college and a duty to the LEA that was funding me at college. I felt grateful I had had a full grant. I'd waste the public money if I didn't complete my course. It was an enormous tension, my responsibility to my child and my responsibility to all these other people, and this was my only opportunity. I still don't know whether it was right or not. I chose to do my probationary year. And it was hard and it broke my heart.

This friend was very good, she had her at home and then the nursery near where I worked, a state nursery, would take her - at that time they were so short of teachers. So my friend inducted her, first one hour, then two, into the nursery. My daughter was very outgoing, never looked back, wanted to go full time. So she went full time and I would collect her. And we went home on the bus; long walks, long bus journeys. Sad.

I grew up very quickly. Faster than my husband. Those years were the formation of me as the backbone of the family, I think. A driving force was in me to do the best for my child, to have quality time for her when I was with her. To work at my relationship with my husband. I put all into everything. I had this terribly difficult class; it was a challenge, they'd put me there because I was the best they had. And I didn't want to let anybody down. That has been my biggest driving force - not to let anybody down, a desire to please - its wrongly seen as ambition sometimes. But how to keep it all together? It was at the expense of me sometimes, but I never counted that. (Relates the difficulties experienced in housing; flats and rented accommodation.) I wanted a roof over my head that was ours. My husband didn't agree. But I was adamant. I was so insecure. It was my money and we were having a house. So, at the end of one year's teaching, I had the deposit together for a little semi. We moved there in 1966. So towards the end of my probationary year, I was having to take my child from nursery and catch two buses. It was awful; she was being sick from the bus journies. So I decided the best thing I could do would be to get a school at ..... and then it's not far although I'll have to work something out for her. I asked the authority for a transfer. So I went to work in ..... Infants and it was just like heaven. The building, resources, the children were so much better. I got her into the local nursery and that was lovely too. The



children were less aggressive. I had to find someone to collect her from nursery because I couldn't make the hours. Strangely enough it was one of my current staff who was at college with me. We didn't know each other, but she lived on my street. She'd got a younger baby. She said she would walk up every day at 3.30 and keep her for half an hour. So I would get home and have a cup of tea in her house and it was lovely. She was very reliable. Better circumstances; not far from home; no bus journeys. Pleasant home; nice outlook. So things began to look up.

I did one term in that school and the headteacher said I ought to go for promotion. And I got promotion. I got a post of special responsibility in another Infants School (in the same area). I was in charge of an annex of three classes, to deal with all the parents, the dinner money, all the secretarial work, all the library. So it was heavy administratively. I had to arrange staff rotas. It was like a mini school. Before I took that my husband and I had a long discussion. I would perhaps have preferred to have another baby and then after time off, start to climb. But he was adamant there would be no more children. I found this very hard. But I wouldn't go against him on this. I found myself facing, well this is my family. I've been robbed of bringing up my child as I would want to. Now what? My daughter didn't need a full time mother any more; she was fully adjusted, she needed to go to nursery. So I had to come to terms with actually becoming a career teacher which up till then I hadn't been. It was always you must do this because of circumstance. Then I had to make some conscious decisions about my career. I decided to make a career and to make it earlier than I ever thought.

He said it didn't matter to him; that he wanted me to be fulfilled. I said are you sure? I had lots of doubts about how it would affect our relationship. I wish he had raised doubts; maybe he didn't understand himself or wasn't used to verbalising things like that. Anyway, I went ahead. I stayed at the second Infants School for two years and two terms. The head urged me to apply for promotion; wanted me to become her deputy head. I wouldn't, because I didn't entirely agree with her philosophy. I applied outside that school. I was being pushed by educationalists - all the way along the line really, to go on. But it was at a pace. I didn't have time to sit back and think what am I doing. In 1969, I became a deputy head at an Infants School (in another area) which caused me problems with my family, with my child. When I had had the graded post, at some point there my daughter became school age. We didn't want her to go to the local infant school (so she went with me to my school). That worked very well indeed. My husband dropped us off at 8 o'clock in the morning. Early - I still break my heart over that. I would never have chosen that. I didn't stay too late. Usually we caught the 4 o'clock, 4.30 bus. But it was a long day for her. But when I got my deputy headship she had not completed her infant time. So what should we do? I said I couldn't take the promotion: I couldn't square it with my family life. But, there was this friend I was teaching with, a single parent mum, and her daughter was the same age as mine. She offered to look after my daughter after school, with hers (and I accepted the deputy head post). How did we do it? I rushed out of school, I didn't work late, I got there at 8 o'clock in the morning and worked my lunch hour. Then I left on the dot; caught two buses home and I was there to meet her when this friend delivered her. I was at home to receive her and that was very important to me then. So that was all right. I can't remember what I did with her in the mornings. Probably we dropped her off to my friend

either at her home or at school. Anyway it can't have been a problem because I can't remember it.

Anyway I was now a career teacher. I didn't want to stay a deputy for very long. I was putting my all into it. I am a leader, I was recognising myself by now, that I would be a lot happier as a head. I remember thinking I would not be too choosy about my first headship. By now I couldn't have her with me. I wanted her settled (an independent school in the centre of town had clear advantages) so she went there.

She got a special bus from school to bring her (back home). But I had no one at home for her. I can't remember why. But I know I used to fly out of school, with seconds to catch my bus and to make the connection for her special bus. Her special bus became the service bus at a certain point and I had to get on that service bus. Oh, the tension. Occasionally it was going out of the bus station and I would get off my connecting bus and flag it down and stand in front of it and jump on. I used to have to say to her now if ever mummy misses it, this is what you do. But it isn't good. I don't think she worried as much as I did, she didn't have the flying about to do. She was with friends on the bus. But I never did miss that bus. It was a close thing at times and I didn't like it.

So we talked over finances and we still weren't that well off. Then Houghton<sup>3</sup> saved the day. Anyway I took driving lessons and passed my test and so I had an old banger. And, oh boy!, the difference that made. It was lovely.

I got my headship in September 1973, at ..... Infants School (age 29). The (Infants and Junior) were amalgamated in 1979. Actually an inspector had given me a first indication that something was up when I told the inspector I was thinking of applying for primary headships. The inspector must have known that all this (amalgamation) was on the cards and obviously had me ear-marked for the job. I see now. The inspector told me to hold-my-horses for a little while: "you've not been here that long dear".

I didn't think I stood much chance of getting the job because I'm female; I haven't got junior teaching experience. This was going to be a big school on a big site and that wasn't what I was looking for. I'd thought of a smaller school to 'cut my teeth on' in primary. The junior head had been there some years and so I thought obviously he would get it, as indeed has proved to be the case in other instances where there has been competition between male and female: the male has got it. Anyway, I really slogged ready for interview. Then the junior head surprised me by saying he was going to take early retirement; which shocked me - he didn't look old enough. He said he felt I was far more competent than he was. which was a great compliment.

Then I had a shock in that they didn't interview. I was appointed head of this big primary without interview. In some ways I'm sorry for it because I feel as if I didn't get it, you know the hard way. I'd love to have shown them what I was made of! (laughter).

For these heads, as individual women and as members of families,

there were certain dilemmas which had to be confronted concerning their early returns to and their full time commitments in their teaching work. These dilemmas had to be negotiated, resolved or accommodated. The heads who were also mothers had had to come to terms with their feelings of maternal guilt about their childcare arrangements when, as mothers of young children they had returned early to their teaching work and to a career. The heads perceived this problem in different ways. Several were confident that through the help of parents and in-laws, friends and neighbours and teacher colleagues (Evetts, 1988), their complicated arrangements had seemed to work and their children had shown no ill-effects. Others were less sure but were reconciled that they had done their best by means of complex coping strategies. But for at least one head, guilt concerning motherhood inadequacies was overwhelming and career success was the only consolation.

Mrs. Porter: (Head of Primary School. Age 48; once divorced, once separated, living with third partner. Two children from first marriage. First headship age 35.)

I have such guilt feelings about my kids. Everybody says don't be so stupid. But they will never go. I would love to start again with my children from birth and do it again. I would, honestly. They had a tough time. I was often so tired that I was only keeping up with things, doing things all the time. In the evenings, I would come home, do whatever housework there was to be done, get a meal, then I would sit down and I'd fall asleep and they wouldn't even be able to wake me. I would suddenly come to and find two children on me waking me up and instead of giving them the time, I'd slept. So the children missed out. I know they did.

They've said I was over-organized and I left no loop-holes for them to express themselves. The rules I had at home, which I had for my own survival, to enable me to keep ticking over - I wouldn't like them to cook because it was an extra job for me to clear up - when I look back now I realise it was dreadful. But doing that sort of thing helped to keep my sanity because I had a very set routine so that everything I had to do, got done and nothing was left undone. It didn't give time for allowing my children to mess about with flour and water and make a mess. It wasn't on my schedule to clear up the mess.

Part of being a teacher is being very organised. Therefore I was very organised at home as well and I think my children very much wish I



had not been so organised. I had everything timed to make sure everything was done and that we were never late. The regime must have been awful for them. The more responsible jobs I got at school, the more organised you have to be so the more organised everything became.

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My career has meant everything to me because I know that the one prevailing factor, thread, in my adult life has been my job. It has been very important, something I have been committed to. I certainly see it as a career rather than as a job. Also I have gone up through the scales and beyond - there's not a lot of people who've had three headships!

Probably I have been too career-minded. The whole thing of education fascinates me. I've probably been very selfish in it. If I'd not been so selfish, I'd have stayed scale one with not many responsibilities and given more time to my children. But I was fascinated with the whole thing and I couldn't let go. It wasn't a secondary thing. It started out as a means to earn money but once I started to climb, I wanted to go on and on.

Thus, perceiving herself to have failed in her family life, over spouse relationships and over parenting, Mrs Porter got great satisfaction from her teaching work and career achievements. In the interview she really came to life when discussing her teaching work; how she organised her school, managed her staff, taught and got to know all the children and arranged her working week.

But, in general for these women, successful compromises had been achieved usually by delaying and postponing increased work and career commitments until family responsibilities had seemed to ease and by limiting applications for promotion posts to those which would not interfere with family arrangements. But the ways in which these heads had confronted this dilemma help to illustrate why conventional models of career are inadequate for many women. The careers of these married women headteachers cannot be adequately represented by career routes models which concentrate on numbers of job changes and timescales for promotion. Promotion in these headteachers careers did not meet the criterion of regular and orderly progress and their career paths were very variable. Career routes analysis could only account for such variations by

explaining that such women 'interrupt' their working careers; they 'break' their teaching service and subsequently they return to their teaching work. But such a formulation misrepresents women's career experiences by regarding such periods of time out-of-work as career imperfections or hinderances and handicaps to a woman's promotion progress. This is not how these women perceived of their time at home. Such periods were part of their developing and emerging careers. For some women, their experiences at home caring for their own young children had actually assisted in the formation of promotion ambitions. And for virtually all these women, childcare and domestic responsibilities continued to be an important part of their developing career intentions, in particular whether to seek promotion or not.

Dilemmas over personal and paid work responsibilities confront all women with a full-time teaching work commitment. But there are additional dilemmas to be resolved by women who are successful in achieving promotion in the teaching career. One of the most important was how these women heads had perceived their promotion successes, their achievement of headteacher posts. Many of the women seemed to want to play down their promotion achievements: such successes were not important in terms of how they perceived themselves as individuals and as women. Often there seemed to be a conflict between their views of themselves as work-career successful and their views of themselves as women, wives and mothers. In achieving promotion, these women had been judged by their superiors as competent, successful, industrious, conscientious and as able leaders and managers. However, they were aware that as a result of their promotion achievements, they might be seen by their friends, colleagues and others as career-teachers, as ambitious, competitive and as self-seeking. In resolving this conflict and reaching an acceptable view of themselves, there were few possible solutions. A small number of the heads (Mrs



Williams) were content to be seen as ambitious; they acknowledged their desire for achievement at work and they were proud of the promotion successes they had so far achieved. However most of the women did not want to be judged by others or to see themselves as career ambitious. They wanted to be, and to be seen to be, good at their work and as competent, able and hard-working but this was to be incidental. An acceptable compromise in this dilemma could be achieved either by acknowledging career ambition or by denying career ambition and attributing promotion success to luck, to being in the right place at the right time or to being pushed and encouraged by others into promotion (Mrs. Grant). For most, the dilemma was resolved by career ambivalence.

But there were other practical dilemmas in the personal sphere to be negotiated. Some women had had to confront and reconcile demands and expectations from wider family members (in particular parents and in-laws) with the responsibilities of a full-time teaching commitment. Most of these women had, at some stage in their careers, been involved in parent and in-laws responsibilities and relationships and several had been involved in the care of such family members. For some heads, parental assistance had facilitated an early return to teaching and had simplified the decision to seek promotion in the career (Mrs. Tanner). But in these cases, their subsequent responsibilities for parents had to be taken into account in arriving at career decisions.

In addition, some women had worried about spouse competition over work and over promotion in the career (Mrs. Grant). Other heads had resolved such issues and did not see such factors as threats to their personal relationships. Thus in dual-career families where both spouses had achieved comparable promotions, the woman's achievements were seen as resulting in more interesting partnerships and in a growth in respect, support and give-and-take between dual career couples. Compromises in

this dilemma had been achieved in different ways: by the woman waiting and delaying her career development; by the woman taking over and seeking promotion if and when the partner seemed content not to go further; by attempting to progress together and mutually supporting each others attempts to achieve promotion (frequently the case where both spouses were career teachers). But where there was conflict, in general the woman's career was the negotiable component.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of the detail of subjective careers can demonstrate the complexity of individuals attitudes to work, to promotion and to career. Where conventional models of career make assumptions about career intentions and ambitions, career histories can illustrate the strategic balances that individuals try to achieve between their work and their personal lives. The idea of a 'subjective career', studied through life histories and career biographies enables researchers to avoid deterministic models by focussing instead on the meaning of work and career in the lives of individual women (and men). The subjective career alerts researchers to the variety, variation and complexity of individuals career aims and ambitions.

But, in addition, histories and biographies can demonstrate the significance of characteristics at the structural level of analysis. All individuals have to construct their careers under certain external conditions of expansion or contraction. In addition, they have to negotiate a particular standardised and hierarchical career structure of promotion posts and horizontal positions that constitute career development opportunities in particular organisations and professions. Furthermore individuals have to manage the characteristics and processes that are part of the working culture of any particular occupational labour

market. Such characteristics and processes can constitute constraints as well as opportunities in the construction of strategies for coping with both paid work and personal/family responsibilities. Thus, career biographies can demonstrate the strategic responses of individuals to external conditions and to particular labour market characteristics.

In the study of women's careers, career histories and biographies have additional advantages. For too long, women's careers have been compared with a male-derived model of regular and systematic progress and promotion. As a consequence, women's careers have been labelled as 'broken' or 'interrupted'; those who do not want to achieve promotion have been characterized as 'lacking in career ambition' or as 'unsuccessful'. But this does not adequately represent the great variety and enormous complexity in women's career aims and ambitions. In particular, we have neglected to consider the interaction of the public sphere of work and the private sphere of home and family in the analysis of the careers of women, as well as of men.

Conventional models of career have been developed from the perspective of organisations and professions, and individuals have been slotted into such models by means of career routes and time scales analyses. The study of career histories and biographies can provide the necessary counterbalance. Career histories can illustrate the variety of meanings that attach to 'having a career'. But, in addition, career histories can demonstrate the complex interrelationship of factors at different levels of analysis and the linkages between such factors. The study of subjective careers, by means of career history and biography, can enable us to make the theoretical link between the structural features of particular labour markets and the experiences and expectations of individual women and men.

## NOTES

1. In England, the primary school teaches children from ages five to eleven, when the children transfer to the secondary comprehensive school. However, in some areas primary education is carried out in separate infant schools (ages five to seven) and junior schools (ages seven to eleven). This diversity of school provision is further complicated by the operation in some areas of first schools (ages five to nine) and middle schools (ages nine to fourteen).

In general, the term 'primary education' refers to education in the following schools: the inclusive primary, the separate infant and junior, and the separate first and 'middle deemed primary' schools. The term 'primary education is equivalent to the term 'elementary education' for the purposes of this paper.

2. In order to preserve the anonymity of the headteachers, their names have been changed and where they themselves identify places and people, these have been omitted. Brackets around phrases indicate my own insertions and a dotted line indicates a move to a different section of the interview.

In terms of Plummer's 'continuum of contamination' (1983, p. 113) which 'locates the extent to which the sociologist imposes his or her own analytical devices upon the subject', I have aspired to systematic thematic analysis where I accumulate 'a series of themes - partly derived from the subjects' accounts and partly derived from sociological theory'.

3. In 1974, the Committee of Inquiry into the pay of Non-University Teachers (Houghton Report) recommended substantial salary increases which were subsequently implemented.



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J2 - J9 Disc5

## PRIMARY TEACHERS' CAREERS: THE CONTEXTS OF EXPANSION AND CONTRACTION

There seems to be general agreement among researchers on education that the 1960s was a period of educational expansion and increased career opportunities for teachers, and that the 1980s is the opposite. A combination of factors is used to explain these different contexts. Thus, it has been suggested that in the 1960s the economy was expanding and there was political optimism, both of which benefited the education service directly. New educational ideas were welcomed and tried. In addition, pupil numbers were increasing: schools were enlarged and new schools were opened. The teaching profession was expanding and at the same time career opportunities were growing: jobs were plentiful and

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"However, the disjunctive that probably runs deepest at the moment is that arising from the economic crisis, falling rolls and government policy which have produced cuts in educational resources and blockages (and in some cases stoppages) and re-routings in teacher careers which contrast greatly with the cooperative days of plenty in the 1960s... Promotions were cooperatively plentiful, over half of those in the late 1960s and early 1970s resulting from the creation of new posts."

In a similar way, under the sub-heading 'The Political, Social and Economic Contexts of Teachers' Work', Bell and Widdows (1989: 2) described

"Any attempt to portray the contemporary situation of teachers' work and teachers' careers must inevitably begin by recognising the changing context within which this is undertaken and careers constructed..."

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## PRIMARY TEACHERS CAREERS: The Contexts of Expansion and Contraction

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"However, the disjunctive that probably runs deepest at the moment is that arising from the economic crisis, falling rolls and government policy which have promoted cuts in educational resources and blockages (and in some cases stoppages) and re-routings in teacher careers which contrast greatly with the comparative days of plenty in the 1960s ... Promotions were comparatively plentiful, over half of those in the late 1960s and early 1970s resulting from the creation of new posts."

In a similar way, under the sub-heading 'The Political, Social and Economic Contexts of Teachers Work', Ball and Goodson (1985: 2) described the changing educational conditions in the following way:

"Any attempt to portray the contemporary situation of teachers' work and teachers' careers must inevitably begin by recognising the changing context within which this is undertaken and careers constructed ..."

From the 1960s we have moved from a situation of teacher shortage and apparently infinite possibilities for the expansion of educational provision to, in the 1980s, a situation of

teacher unemployment and contraction in provision, with one or two exceptions, across the system as a whole."

Then Ball and Goodson go on to elaborate on the changes in the conditions of teaching work and in the whole conception of a career in teaching since the 1960s.

Sometimes such descriptions of changing educational conditions have involved assertions about the different effects on different groups of teachers. Geoffrey Partington (1976: ix) claimed that the different educational circumstances in the 1960s and in the 1970s were likely to have affected the status and promotion prospects of women teachers more than men teachers:

"The acute shortage of women teachers over three decades has been a very powerful aid in improving their relative position in teaching, but in the 1970s the demographic and teacher supply situations have changed very dramatically. A falling birth rate and a larger number of qualified teachers available for appointment than ever before will have implications for all teachers, but women teachers and especially married women teachers may well find themselves more vulnerable than men."

However the problem with such statements is that they are comments on the teaching profession in general and in most research that has meant the secondary teaching profession. I want to argue that there are important differences in the effects of expansion and contraction on primary teaching compared with secondary teaching. Certainly it is necessary to analyse to what extent expansion of career opportunities was general. Did it affect all teachers, primary as well as secondary, or only certain categories of teachers? Similarly were the consequences of expansion of the profession that straight-forward? Did expansion necessarily mean increased career opportunities? Did expansion mean increased career opportunities for some teachers but not for others? Were women primary teachers career opportunities affected in the same way as



their male colleagues? What were the consequences of the numerical predominance of women in the primary teaching profession?

In order to analyse the effects of expansion and contraction on the primary teaching profession from the 1950s to the 1980s, it is necessary to differentiate two separate factors. The first is the issue of growth and reduction of pupil numbers, schools and teaching posts in primary teaching. The second factor is the changes in the teachers career structure over the thirty year period. These factors will be discussed separately focusing on the consequences for primary teachers career opportunities and the differential consequences for men and women primary teachers.

Expansion and Contraction in Primary Education

The 1960's have been variously described, but there is general agreement that as far as (primary) teachers were concerned these were the halcyon days. In fact in terms of ~~primary pupil numbers~~ numbers of local education authority nursery and primary schools, nationally the mid-1950s were probably the peak years. Table I gives the statistics of numbers of pupils and numbers of schools and Table II gives numbers of full-time nursery and primary teachers, for a number of years at five year intervals from 1950 to 1985.

As far as primary pupils numbers are concerned, these have averaged around 4.3 million over the 30 year period. There was a drop to 4.2 million in 1960 and then a rise to an all-time high of 5.0 million in 1975. But the 1980s have seen a dramatic reduction to 3.5 million primary pupils in 1985. This figure is the lowest for the thirty year time series.

The number of primary and nursery schools has shown the same pattern of fluctuation. The largest number of schools were recorded in

TABLE I

FULL-TIME PRIMARY PUPILS AND MAINTAINED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN  
ENGLAND AND WALES

	Nursery	Primary	Total
		Numbers of full-time	Numbers of maintained
		Primary Pupils	Primary Schools
1950		130,412*	130,412
1950	948	3,955,472	23,133
1955		4,600,862	23,664
1960	911	4,201,123	23,488
1965	1,412	4,273,101	22,882
1970*	1,732	4,912,874	23,060
1975	1,667	5,097,329	23,256
1980		4,207,327	21,214
1985		3,540,252	19,716

\* Includes nursery

\* After and including 1970, figures include 'middle deemed primary'.

Source: Statistics of Education, Teachers, Vol. 4.  
 Source: DES Statistics of Education: Schools

TABLE II

FULL-TIME TEACHERS IN MAINTAINED NURSERY AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS

	Nursery	Primary	Total
1950		130,412*	130,412
1960	848	142,695	143,507
1965		144,921*	144,921
1970	911	162,376	163,287
1975	1,412	200,860	202,272
1980	1,732	195,495	197,227
1985	1,687	169,591	171,278

\* Includes nursery.

Gender Differences

Source: Statistics of Education, Teachers, Vol. 4.

However, when we consider how this expansion and contraction in primary teaching affected men and women teachers, some interesting differences emerge (Table III). This is demonstrated if we compare the different growth and contraction rates for men and women primary teachers. From the lowest to the highest years, 1950 and 1975, numbers of women primary teachers increased by 65% (from 94,594 to 155,864 teachers) whereas numbers of men primary teachers increased by 30% (from 35,818 to 45,408 teachers). Then, from the highest to the most recent years, 1975

the 1950s (23,664 schools in 1955 and 23,488 schools in 1960).

Subsequently the number fell slightly (to 22,882 schools in 1965), although rising again in the late 1960s (to 23,060 schools in 1970). In the mid 1970s there was an expansion in the number of primary schools (to 23,256). In the 1980s there has been a reduction (to 19,716 schools), again the lowest number for the thirty year time series. The total number of schools is important in discussing primary teachers careers since it indicates the growth or reduction in numbers of headteacher and deputy head posts (one of each per school) and other promotion posts available.

The total numbers of full-time nursery and primary teachers shows a more consistent trend. The numbers of teachers have been increasing since 1950; gradually until 1970 and then dramatically until 1975. By 1985 the number of full-time nursery and primary teachers had fallen back to approximately the early 1970's figure. In general, then, over the whole of England and Wales, the primary teaching profession was expanding until the late 1970s and the greatest increases were in the 1970s. From 1980 to 1985, there was a national reduction of 25,949 teaching posts in primary education.

### Gender Differences

However, when we consider how this expansion and contraction in primary teaching affected men and women teachers, some interesting differences emerge (Table III). This is demonstrated if we compare the different growth and contraction rates for men and women primary teachers. From the lowest to the highest years, 1950 and 1975, numbers of women primary teachers increased by 65% (from 94,594 to 155,864 teachers) whereas numbers of men primary teachers increased by 30% (from 35,818 to 46,408 teachers). Then, from the highest to the most recent years, 1975



TABLE III

**NURSERY AND PRIMARY TEACHERS IN ENGLAND AND WALES: NUMBERS AND PROPORTIONS OF MEN AND WOMEN**

	Men		Women		Total
	Number	Percentage of Men	Number	Percentage of Women	
1950	35,818	27.5	94,594	72.5	130,412
1960	36,766	25.6	106,741	74.4	143,507
1965	36,226	25.0	108,695	75.0	144,921
1970	40,984	25.1	122,303	74.9	163,287
1975	46,408	22.9	155,864	77.1	202,272
1980	45,092	22.9	152,135	77.1	197,227
1985	37,587	21.9	133,691	78.1	171,278

Source: Statistics of Education, Teachers, vol. 4.

and 1985, numbers of women primary teachers have been reduced by 14% (155,864 to 133,691) whereas numbers of men primary teachers have been reduced by 19% (46,408 to 37,587). It would seem, therefore, that women benefitted more than men primary teachers from the expansion of primary teaching posts and also that women teachers have not been as badly affected as men primary teachers by the cut back in primary posts. This is in terms of sheer numbers of primary teachers, however, and gives no indication of promotion opportunities.

The different effects of expansion and contraction on men and women primary teachers is also demonstrated in the statistics relating to part-time teachers in primary education. One of the characteristics of the primary teaching labour market is that there are opportunities for married women to return to their teaching work as part-time and/or supply teachers for a period usually when they are caring for their own young children at home. The availability of part-time and supply work is usually regarded as an index of the extent to which an occupation gives opportunities to married women to enable them to maintain their career commitment by seeking to combine paid work with their family responsibilities. Teaching is perhaps unique among white collar and professional occupations in the extent to which there are opportunities for women to fulfil a part-time teaching commitment when their family responsibilities are heavy. But part-time teaching posts are assumed to have been one of the casualties of the reduction in teaching posts in the 1980s.

The statistics in Table IV indicate, as one would anticipate, that part-time primary teaching is a feature of significance to women (rather than men). Men have never constituted more than 5% of part-time primary teachers and are usually between 2 and 3% of the part-time primary teaching labour force only. It is interesting to note that in the period

TABLE IV

PART-TIME TEACHERS IN MAINTAINED PRIMARY (INCLUDING NURSERY) SCHOOLS

	1962	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985
Women	8,411	13,788	19,580	21,361		
Men	428	466	572	574		
Total: Nursery and Primary	8,839	14,254	20,152	21,935	16,426	17,750
Total: Nursery, Primary and Secondary	21,131	30,772	38,096	42,164	33,143	34,855
Primary Part-Timers as percentage of all part-timers	41.8%	46.3%	52.9%	52.0%	49.6%	50.9%

Source: DES Statistics of Education, Teachers, vol. 4

of expansion of numbers of primary teachers (1962-1975), the part-time component was growing fastest, by 148%. Also, the reduction in part-time primary teaching posts has not been as drastic as is often assumed. There was a 25% drop in part-time primary teachers from 1975 to 1980, but the numbers of these posts have now increased again making a reduction of 19% from the highest year 1975 to the year 1985. It should be noted that part-time primary teachers are an increasing proportion of all part-time teachers and are now about 50% of all part-timers. It is also important to bear in mind that there are significant variations between local educational authorities in the extent to which numbers of part-time teachers were expanded and have been reduced. In addition, in terms of the discussion later, it is important to remember that part-time and supply teachers, particularly in the primary sector, have been paid as scale one teachers only.

In general then, it is possible to demonstrate that the picture of educational expansion, usually attributed as a 1960s feature, is rather a 1970s feature, certainly as far as numbers of primary teachers and numbers of primary pupils are concerned. But most important for primary teachers careers is the number of primary, junior and infant, or middle and first, schools since it is this which determines the numbers of deputy and headship posts available. In fact, the numbers of primary schools has shown some fluctuation. The largest numbers of primary schools were recorded in the 1950s (23,664 schools in 1955) not in the 1960s. In fact, the number was reduced in the 1960s (to 22,882 schools in 1965), rising again in the mid 1970s (to 23,256 schools). Then the numbers fell again in the mid 1980s (to 19,716 schools). Also, it is important to bear in mind that at the level of individual local educational authorities, there were important differences in the extent to which new primary (separate infant and junior, or first and middle) schools were opened or existing



schools were expanded.

In the primary sector then, there was not a tremendous increase in numbers of schools in the 1960s or 1970s which would have resulted in an expansion in numbers of primary promotion posts (head and deputy positions). Rather, the number of schools was fluctuating, any increases were modest and, in fact, numbers never reached the peak 1950s figure. The biggest expansion of the primary teaching profession took place in the early 1970s. But without other significant changes, expansion alone (with no increase in promotion posts) would have represented a worsening of career opportunities for primary teachers.

Changes in Teachers Career Structure

The specific salary levels and the structure of positions in the promotion hierarchy for teachers were decided by the Burnham Committee from 1919 until 1987. In 1987, faced with a divided profession unable to reach agreement, the Secretary of State for Education abolished Burnham and imposed a new teaching career structure. The system of scaled posts and positions revised in 1956 and 1971, and on which the analyses in this paper are based, was replaced in 1987 with a common basic scale and incentive allowances for additional responsibilities and special skills. The separate salary scales for heads and deputies remained. The consequences of this new salary structure for teachers careers cannot, as yet, be assessed.

The history of Burnham settlements in respect of teachers careers has been outlined by Hilsum and Start (1974: 25 - 35) although Hilsum and Start could not have included the consequences of the changes in 1971. The history of the changes to the career structure has involved, over a period of 30 years, increasing the number of steps or layers in the promotion ladder. Thus, before 1956, the only promotion statuses open to

a teacher were a Post of Special Responsibility or a Headship (Hilsum and Start, 1974: 26). The 1956 agreement added three main types of post: Graded Posts (three levels, scales I, II and III), Head of Department and Deputy Head. Hilsum and Start (1974: 31) claimed that:

"The crucial point was that from 1956 a teacher could see his (sic) prospects in terms of a series of fairly well-defined stages, each of which, if reached, conferred upon the teacher not just financial rewards but also recognition of his status level in the professional hierarchy."

The 1971 settlement introduced further refinements. Deputies, as well as Heads, were to have separate scales. Other teachers were to be paid according to one of five scales (later reduced to four). Scale one was the starting scale and this scale spanned 15 years. Scales two to five (or four) were promotion scales. Second master/mistress posts were retained and a new post of senior teacher was created, these to be awarded only in the largest (usually secondary) schools. This increasingly hierarchical career structure was justified as offering opportunities for all teachers. Thus, Roy (1983: 78-9) noted:

"... the advocates of the basic scale faded away, to be replaced by new leaders wanting a fair deal for every teacher, linking promotion to different salary scales and thus enabling every teacher to see clearly the existence of a promotion ladder."

However, such conclusions were reached in respect of the teaching profession in general and this usually meant the secondary (as opposed to the primary) teacher. The consequences of these changes in the career structure for primary teachers were somewhat different. Because primary (and particularly infant) schools are smaller and their pupils necessarily younger, and because of the operation of the unit total system(1) in determining the numbers of promotion posts available in schools, this range of status levels has never been available for teachers in primary education. For primary teachers, a typical career route might be from scale one to two; some might proceed to scale three if a school were

large enough but most would move to a deputy and then to a headship. The 1971 settlement represented increased career opportunities for primary teachers compared with the situation prior to 1956 when only headship statuses were available. But for primary teachers, the layers in the promotion ladder were not significantly different after 1971 to what they were after 1956. Thus, after 1956, graded posts (scale 1) deputy and headship posts were available. After 1971, scale two, (some scale three), deputy and headship posts were available as staging posts in the primary teaching career. But for primary teachers more than secondary teachers, promotion opportunities depended on numbers of primary schools and therefore of primary deputy and headship posts, not on increased numbers of promotion layers or levels.

### Gender Differences

From career opportunities generally in primary education, it is interesting to consider what the consequences of such changes have been for men and women primary teachers. Were there any significant gender differences in the achievement of promotion posts and how have any such differences changed over time?

Table V summarises the information available on the scale positions of men and women primary (including nursery) teachers over the twenty year period 1966 to 1985. The move from 1966 to 1975 in the Table does mark a real change in the status levels since Graded Post 1 became Scale 2. The Scale Posts in 1975 and 1985 are not equivalent to those in 1966, therefore.

The gender differences in the proportions of teachers on the basic scale have been marked over the period. In 1966, 62.6% of primary teachers were on the basic assistant grade (36.2% of men and 72.1% of women). In 1975, 41.0% of teachers were on the basic scale one (17.1% of

**TABLE V**  
**GRADES OF QUALIFIED FULL-TIME TEACHERS IN ALL MAINTAINED PRIMARY (INCLUDING NURSERY) SCHOOLS:**  
**MEN AND WOMEN (ENGLAND AND WALES)**

	MEN			WOMEN		
	1966	1975	1985	1966	1975	1985
Headteachers	11,979	13,565	11,847	11,129	10,171	9,891
Deputies	5,376	7,275	7,384	8,465	11,309	11,146
2nd Masters/Mistresses	961	131	262	1,081	153	354
and Other Heads of Departments*						
Graded Posts:						
Scale 3	17	1,546	4,548	19	2,470	10,156
Scale 2	142	15,833	10,105	152	56,254	55,492
Scale 1	4,250	7,886	3,441	6,739	74,725	46,652
Other Assistants+	12,873			71,311		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35,598</b>	<b>46,236</b>	<b>37,587</b>	<b>98,896</b>	<b>155,082</b>	<b>133,691</b>

\* After 1971 Scale career structure reorganised. After 1972 includes senior teachers and scale 4.

+ After 1971 Scale career structure reorganised. Assistant grade became scale 1.

Source: Statistics of Education, Teacher Vol. 4.



men and 48.2% of women). In 1985, 29.2% of teachers were on the basic scale one (9.2% of men and 34.9% of women). So although the proportion of the primary teaching population on the basic scale has been declining from approximately two-thirds in 1966 to less than one-third in 1985, the proportion of women at this grade has fallen from 72% to 35% whereas the proportion of men at this grade has fallen from 36% to 9%.

It does seem, however, that the 1971 changes in the career structure were effective in increasing career opportunities for men primary teachers and to a lesser extent for women, in that after 1971 scale two (and to a lesser extent scale three) positions did become achievable steps in the promotions ladder. The growth in scale three posts should also be noted. These represented 8.6% of all primary teaching posts in 1985 (12.1% for men and 7.6% for women) compared with 2% of all primary teaching posts in 1975.

However the most significant gender difference is in the extent to which men, compared with women primary teachers, achieve primary headships. For men primary teachers the career ladder has always been real in that approximately one-third of all men primary teachers are in primary headships. In 1966, 33.7% of all men primary teachers were heads; in 1975, 29.3% and in 1985, 31.5% of men primary teachers were heads. The corresponding figures for women are: 1966, 11.3%; 1975, 6.6%; 1985, 7.4%. Thus, for men, the proportions of primary teachers who achieve headships has remained at about 30%, while for women the proportion who achieve headships declined over the period of expansion and in 1985 was about 7%.

It seems, therefore, that primary teaching represents an occupation with a career ladder to a headship post that is achievable by something like one-third of male teachers. But that this career goal is achievable by only something like 7% of female primary teachers and this proportion

declined over the period of expansion and supposedly of increased career opportunities. There are, however, additional points to be made. The headship posts which are occupied by women are predominantly headships of separate infant, first and nursery schools in contrast to the headships of junior, middle and primary schools which are predominantly male. Because of the operation of the unit total system and the smaller size of particularly infant and nursery schools, these headships are less rewarding in terms of income and status than the headships of junior, middle and primary schools. But, on the other hand, there are rather more infant headships. Some women achieve primary headships but it is interesting to note (Evetts in Acker, 1989) that their route to such a headship will have been different. Thus whereas men might proceed directly to a deputy and then the headship of a primary school, most women primary heads will have proceeded via the headship of an infant school or will occupy the headship of a small rural primary school. The career routes to headship positions demonstrate important gender differences, therefore.

Also, it should be noted that for women, more so than men, there were likely to be blockages in their career routes. More women than men primary teachers tended to get stuck at scale two. Table VI cannot illustrate the movement in and out of scale positions but if the percentages at scale two are calculated, it seems significant that 26.9% of men teachers were on scale two whereas 41.5% of women teachers were on this scale. In addition, the deputy head position might also represent a significant sticking point in the careers of both men and women. But whereas 19.6% of men teachers were deputies and 8.3% of women teachers, the higher proportions of primary headships for men (31.5%) compared with women (7.4%), leads to the conclusion that women were more likely to remain at the deputy position than were men.

## Conclusion

The first point that needs to be emphasized by way of concluding remarks is that primary teaching is a different sort of occupation in many important respects from secondary teaching. Hence generalisations assumed to be about teachers and about the teaching profession, in respect of the effects of expansion and contraction, are at best over-simplifications and at worst are positively misleading. Most researchers have focused on secondary teachers and then have assumed that generalisations apply to all teachers. This paper has been concerned to demonstrate that this is not always the case. It is necessary to urge that the two parts of the teaching profession are analysed separately in any future discussion of the external and educational conditions and contexts that might affect the growth or reduction of career opportunities for teachers. This is particularly important in any analysis of the recent changes to the teaching career structure, the return to a basic scale with incentive allowances. Generalisations about such changes might apply to both primary and secondary teachers but this should be established rather than assumed at the outset.

In addition, it is also important to emphasize that expansion or growth of the teaching profession does not necessarily mean any expansion of promotional opportunities in teaching. Certainly in primary education, if the number of schools and hence of head and deputy posts stays much the same, then career opportunities are likely to be reduced in a growing profession. Over the period of educational expansion in the 1970s, nationally there were increases in the numbers of primary schools (and thus of primary headships) but these were only modest increases and it is important to remember that the situation at the local level was very variable. Also, it seems that the promotional chances of women in primary



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education will be more reduced than men's by expansion in the profession. The increased demand for primary teachers in the late 1960s and 1970s which brought about the growth in the primary teaching profession, resulted in a tremendous increase in part-time primary teaching posts and an increase in scale one and scale two posts for women. But this was not accompanied by any increase in the proportion of women who occupied higher level promotion posts in primary education. Indeed the proportion of women in primary headships was at its lowest point in the mid-1970s.

A further conclusion relates to the changes in the career structure and the effects for primary teachers. In primary teaching, changes in the career structure, brought in after 1971, expanded opportunities at the lower levels of the promotion ladder, scale two and some scale three positions. But the proliferation of status levels that expanded career opportunities in secondary teaching did not apply in primary education. Primary teachers did not benefit to anything like the extent of secondary teachers from the increased number of status and promotion levels. Primary teachers are more dependent than secondary teachers on the growth in numbers of schools rather than the growth in numbers of promotion positions, for their career opportunities. Thus the increasing numbers of women primary teachers in the expanding profession in the late 1960s and 1970s came to occupy the lowest levels of the promotion ladder to a much greater extent than the increasing numbers of men during that period. Also, in the declining primary teacher numbers in the 1980s, the proportion of men primary teachers is at its lowest for the 30 year period (21.9%, Table VI) and yet men's proportion of all primary headships is 54.5% (Table VI). Thus around 30% of men primary teachers achieve a headship. This fell slightly (to 29%) in the mid-1970s in the period of expansion but in the contraction years of the mid-1980s, the figure is back to 31.5%.



It seems clear, therefore, that women teachers benefitted from the expansion of the primary teaching profession only to the extent that they were able to enter the profession and return to their teaching work after a break in service more easily in the late 1960s and 1970s than in the 1980s. But in terms of promotion opportunities, women continued to occupy the lower ranks of the profession even in the expansion days of the 1970s. Nationally women's achievement of headteacher positions declined during the period of expansion. Both men and women primary teachers are dependent for increased promotion opportunities on increasing numbers of primary schools. Women are very dependent on the growth in numbers of separate infant and first schools. The expansion in numbers of schools was very variable between local educational authorities even when pupil numbers were increasing. Career opportunities in primary education, therefore, are dependent on local authority initiatives in coping with growing or declining pupil numbers. Thus, in the 1970s, some local authorities developed new schools while others expanded existing schools. Also the extent to which local authorities favour separate infant and junior, first and middle schools or favour inclusive primary schools can have a dramatic impact on the career opportunities for men and women primary teachers. Thus the situation is highly complex but in general, in promotional terms, primary teachers benefitted less than secondary teachers from changes in the teaching career structure and women teachers benefitted less than men teachers in terms of career opportunities from expansion of the primary teaching profession. The analysis of the effects of the latest changes in the salary structure are awaited with interest.

## NOTES

1. The criteria for determining the responsibilities and the salaries of head teachers of schools of varying sizes and for deciding the number and type of promotion posts available in a school, are the number and age of pupils on roll. These are compounded into one basic operating principle called the 'unit total'.

S. HILSUM and K. B. START (1974) Promotion and Careers in Teaching, p. 307, explains the unit total system as follows:

Each pupil under thirteen adds one-and-a-half points to the unit total, those aged thirteen to fifteen, two points, fifteen to sixteen, four points, sixteen to seventeen, six points and over seventeen, ten points.

The 'unit total' then determines the group to which a school is allocated.

There are many more headships of primary and infant than of secondary schools and more headships of infant than of primary schools because there are a larger number of such schools. But infant headships are much less rewarding in financial terms because the unit total system means such schools are allotted to a low group only.

For the latest up-dating of the unit total system see DES, 1987, p.28.

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**WOMEN IN PRIMARY TEACHING:**  
**Career Contexts and Strategies**

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## Acknowledgements

### **WOMEN IN PRIMARY TEACHING: Career Contexts and Strategies**

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I would also like to thank my own family, Dave, Victoria and Paul, who remind me every day of what is important about the experience of career.

### Series Editor's Preface

Each volume in the Key Issues in Education<sup>Series</sup> is designed to provide a concise, authoritative guide to a topic of current concern to teachers, researchers and educational policy-makers. The books in the series comprise an introduction to some of the key debates in the contemporary practice of education. In particular, each author demonstrates how the Social Sciences can help us to analyse, explain and understand educational issues. The books in the series review key debates, and the authors complement this material by making detailed reference to their own research, which helps to illustrate the way research evidence in the Social Sciences and education can contribute to our understanding of educational policy and practice.

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Continued....

Preface

The last decade has witnessed considerable interest in teachers as an occupational group yet the available research evidence relates predominantly to secondary school teachers and their work. In this volume Julia Evetts breaks new ground by focusing on a group of <sup>twenty five</sup> ~~25~~ women, primary and infant headteachers. Her study on the career histories of these women contributes to a range of key issues and debates about the position of women teachers, the pattern of their careers and the shape of their lives and their work.

Robert Burgess

University of Warwick



## Preface

### INTRODUCTION

The anticipated labour market shortages are likely to make women and career one of the predominant issues of the 1990s. Studies of careers in teaching have increased over the last ten years but few have focused on women and even fewer have considered primary teaching. This book constitutes an attempt to ask questions about what is important for women developing careers in primary and infant teaching. It considers the wider contexts (the promotion structure and the nature of the labour market) in which primary teaching careers are made. And it explores the strategies which some women have devised to enable them to develop their careers.

in the first year as the number one. The head had had my name given to him as someone interested in going back to full-time teaching. I suppose he would have been appointed and he'd be looking for staff and the authority would say "Well here is somebody who has done some part-time work and maybe she would be interested in full-time". I don't know. You see it was different then because there were not enough people for the number of jobs that were going. I mean I never intended to go back when (my son) was eighteen months old. The money was very nice but I wasn't really bothered about going back. They sort of encouraged you to go back and made it so that you really felt well you couldn't refuse. Anyway I missed school because I mean I had been married seven years before I had a child.

So I went back full-time in September 1966. In 1967 I was made deputy head. Then in 1970 I was made head of

## INTRODUCTION

Mrs Northfield (Head of Infants' School

Age 51; second marriage;

one son from first marriage)

I went back to work full-time in September 1966 when (my son) was four, going to be five in the February. I went to a brand new primary school. There was just me and the head at first and then we got two or three staff in the first year as the numbers came. The head had had my name given to him as someone interested in going back to full-time teaching. I suppose he would have been appointed and he'd be looking for staff and the authority would say "Well here is somebody who has done some part-time work and maybe she would be interested in full-time". I don't know. You see it was different then because there were not enough people for the number of jobs that were going. I mean I never intended to go back when (my son) was eighteen months old. The money was very nice but I wasn't really bothered about going back. They sort of encouraged you to go back and made it so that you really felt well you couldn't refuse. Anyway I missed school because I mean I had been married seven years before I had a child.

So I went back full-time in September 1966. In 1967 I was made deputy head. Then in 1970 I was made head of

the same school. I never had a scale post; I went straight from scale one to deputy head. One of the inspectors came in one day and said "Have you ever thought of applying for deputy headships?" I said no and she said "Well the way you are in this classroom with these children, you definitely ought to be thinking about looking for promotion". She said "If I find anything out for you..." - well, they do jolly people along, let's be honest. I didn't really think any more about it. Then not too long afterwards, the head came to see me and said "There's a deputy headship going here, do you want it?" I just looked at him and said "Well, aren't you supposed to advertise it?" He said "No. (The inspector) thinks you ought to have it". And that was how I got the deputy headship. I wasn't even interviewed for it. I just got it because I was there.

I was very shattered when (the head) left because we got on really well ... He said "So you apply for my job". I said "Oh no. I don't want to be a head".

"Yes," he said "it's a lovely little school and you know how it runs and all that. So you must apply for it".

So I applied for it and I nearly collapsed through the floor when they gave it to me. That was it, quite honestly. I mean I didn't have any ambitions. But then having said that, I wouldn't have liked to work for somebody else there. You know, we'd built it up from a new school with the builders still in.

But I had a very difficult time in the first year or

so of my headship. Having been deputy and then head of a school where you had been an ordinary teacher, it wasn't easy. Some of the staff were alright but some of them weren't. I did have problems with one of the staff, one particular person. A fellow who probably didn't like working for a women head. I don't know. But he became a head himself later and I often see him at headteachers' meetings and he's apologised for how he was with me. So it was a fairly unhappy time.

Then in 1973 my marriage began to break up - due to my being a head I should think. Well, I think it helped. My husband went off with someone else and of course it rocked the village when all this happened. I thought it would be a good idea to get out of the village so I applied for (my present infants' school). The inspector had told me to apply for this school. He knew all about my marriage difficulties and he helped me. I had an interview for it, I mean it wasn't a walkover. So I moved house and started as head of school here a week later.

All of these aspects are important in attempts to understand the factors which influence women's careers in primary teaching. It is The study of women's careers poses interesting problems for researchers. In the above extract from Mrs Northfield's account of her career in primary teaching, she interrelates developments in her working career with aspects of her personal and family life. In her interpretation of career the private and the public are intertwined and closely interrelated. Mrs Northfield related what was for her the logic



and coherence of her career, her work and family life. In her self-conscious, retrospective account of key points, changes and developments, she sees work and family as closely connected and interrelated; her teaching career and her personal life cannot be separated and kept distinct. But Mrs Northfield's account also contains information. She tells of aspects of the work culture of primary teaching, of working relationships within schools between heads, deputies and classroom teachers and beyond school with inspector/advisers. Sometimes such relations are harmonious, helpful, co-operative and cordial and sometimes relations give rise to difficulties as when one member of staff in particular was unco-operative following her promotion. Her account gives important information about informal occupational networks, of advice, guidance and influence between heads, inspectors and teachers. In addition we learn about the wider conditions affecting teachers' work; of teacher shortage, of there not being enough teachers for the number of jobs that were available. She tells us about the promotion ladder in teaching, at the time a system of scaled posts (now changed) and the managerial positions of head and deputy. And of how in her own case, she missed out steps in the promotion ladder by moving straight from scale one to a deputy head position.

All of these aspects are important in attempts to understand the factors which influence women's careers in primary teaching. It is necessary to explore the aspects identified in Mrs Northfield's interpretation of events, her perception of the constraints and opportunities in her developing career. But it is necessary also to examine the characteristics of primary teaching as a job of work and the mechanisms in the labour market for primary teachers whereby individuals get teaching jobs and some achieve promotion. In addition it is important

to remember that external conditions of expansion and contraction can influence career opportunities. When the demand for teachers is high and the supply of teachers is low relative to demand, how then are career chances altered or affected?

This book explores the different factors which influence and affect women's careers in primary teaching and attempts to interrelate such factors. Using DES statistical data and career history material from interviews with married women primary and infant headteachers, a number of factors are identified and a model of analysis is developed in chapter one. The second chapter considers the effect of different external conditions and of changes in the promotion structure for the careers of women primary teachers. Chapter three looks at the work culture of primary teaching and at the characteristics of the labour market for primary teachers in respect of the influence they have on women's careers. These external conditions and the characteristics of the labour market form the contexts within which women primary teachers develop their career strategies and these strategies are examined in chapter four. Chapters five and six explore the effects of interrupting teaching service and of managing the family, on women's careers. The beginnings of promotion and career development for women primary teachers are examined in chapter seven. In chapter eight a career history extract is used to illustrate the different kinds of influences on women's careers in primary teaching. Factors of more general relevance to women's careers, in other occupations and professions, are identified and examined. Then some of the wider implications of increased managerialism in the headteacher role are considered.

Teaching is usually described as a profession. For a number of years sociologists interested in teachers debated and discussed whether or not

teaching constituted a profession, a semi-profession or an occupation (Leggatt, 1970; Etzioni, 1969; Hoyle, 1969). Teachers themselves had diverse interpretations about what constituted a profession (Ginsburg, Meyenn and Miller, 1980). Ozga and Lawn (1981) have argued that teaching is an occupation and that teachers should be perceived as workers. Teachers have used the ideology of professionalism in their attempts to secure improved status, higher salaries and more autonomy in the execution of their work. But teachers have had professionalism used against them when they take industrial action in order to promote their cause. Acker (1983, 1987) has claimed that, as well as involving a sexist stereotype, much of the discussion about teachers and professionalization has been rendered tangential in view of changes such as reduced autonomy in classrooms and increased managerial control of teachers work. Burgess (1986) has summarized the recent history of research on teaching as a profession. He has demonstrated how, in the 1980s and largely as a result of changes in the conditions of teachers' work, teachers and sociologists have become less preoccupied with professionalism and more concerned with the issue of teaching and career.

Teachers are often portrayed by the media as one profession. But teachers have never had a strong collective identity and divisions and differences between teachers have been a continuing source of interest to educational commentators and researchers. Gender is an important division. Men and women are both well-represented in teaching but they are distributed differently in relation to the ages of their pupils, the subjects they teach and their achievement of promotion posts (Acker, 1987). Another important division is that between primary and secondary teachers. Some educational authorities operate middle schools and this complicates the issue. But teachers of pupils of different ages, in

separate and distinct educational establishments do not have common working conditions and do not share similar work cultures. Neither do their careers take a similar form or route; promotion opportunities for primary and secondary teachers are different. This book is about women teachers' careers in primary education. Clarification of the career constraints and opportunities for this particular group of teachers should enable the similarities and differences in the careers of other teachers to be identified. (1985).

In the 1930s and 1960s the focus was on 'role' (Skilling, 1937; Wilson, 1962), on 'professionalization' (Lieberman, 1966; Eliot, 1969) and on statistical analysis of the characteristics of teachers and of their position in society (Clegg, 1964, 1967; Fildes and Scott, 1961; Kelsall, 1963). In the 1970s Ball and Goodson claimed that the emphasis shifted to the constraints on teachers' work. Some studies (Sharp and Green, 1975; Woods, 1978) focused on the societal and economic determinants of education and explained how constraints limited both the aims and the practice of teachers' work. The 1970s also saw a revival of the interactionist theoretical perspective in research in the sociology of education and this continued in the 1980s. In such research the emphasis was on individuals' construction of reality, on meaning, understanding and experience (Woods, 1983). In the 1970s and 1980s the interactionist perspective was used extensively in research on teachers and teachers' careers (Mannering, 1977; Woods, 1980; Riechert, 1981; Hys, 1984, 1985; Ball and Goodson, 1985; Sikes et al., 1985). Interactionist perspectives moved the focus of research on teachers on to the immediate practical problems of being a teacher and coping day by day in schools and classrooms. Ball and Goodson (1985) have claimed that in the 1980s there were fruitful exchanges between interactionist approaches and researchers emphasizing the wider societal, economic and cultural



## Chapter 1

### WOMEN TEACHERS' CAREERS: CONTEXTS AND STRATEGIES

Research on teachers has a long history in sociology and in education. From the 1950s to the 1980s, there have been important changes in focus and shifts in emphasis and these changes have been catalogued by Ball and Goodson (1985). In the 1950s and 1960s the focus was on 'role' (Stiles, 1957; Wilson, 1962), on 'professionalization' (Lieberman, 1956; Etzioni, 1969) and on statistical analyses of the characteristics of teachers and of their position in society (Tropp, 1954, 1957; Floud and Scott, 1961; Kelsall, 1963). In the 1970s Ball and Goodson claimed that the emphasis shifted to the constraints on teachers work. Some studies (Sharp and Green, 1975; Woods, 1979) focused on the societal and economic determinants of education and explained how constraints limited both the aims and the practice of teachers work. The 1970s also saw a revival of the interactionist theoretical perspective in research in the sociology of education and this continued in the 1980s. In such research the emphasis was on individuals' construction of reality, on meaning, understanding and experience (Woods, 1983). In the 1970s and 1980s the interactionist perspective was used extensively in research on teachers and teachers' careers (Hammersley, 1977; Woods, 1980; Riseborough, 1981; Nias, 1984, 1985; Ball and Goodson, 1985; Sikes et al, 1985). Interactionist perspectives moved the focus of research on teachers on to the immediate practical problems of being a teacher and coping day by day in schools and classrooms. Ball and Goodson (1985) have claimed that in the 1980s there were fruitful exchanges between interactionist approaches and researchers emphasizing the wider societal, economic and cultural

constraints on teachers. These exchanges have resulted in teachers' experiences being situated more extensively within the wider political, social and economic contexts within which they work and which influence their experiences of work and of career.

During this forty year period, gender came to prominence as a critical variable in research on teachers and teaching. Some of the early studies of the teaching role made reference to the different role attributes of men and women in teaching (Floud and Scott, 1961) and Kelsall's statistical analysis (1963) focused on the characteristics of women teachers. Gender had always been a significant issue in research on the history of teaching (Tropp, 1957; Glenday and Price, 1974; Partington, 1976; Widdowson, 1980; Hoffman, 1981; Oram, 1983, 1985, 1987). But during the 1970s (Byrne, 1978; Deem, 1978) and increasingly in the 1980s, gender was made a critical issue in education and some researchers focused their analyses on women teachers and women teachers' careers (Acker, 1983, 1987, 1988, 1989; Kaufman, 1984; Spencer, 1986; Shakeshaft, 1987; DeLyon and Migniuolo, 1989).

## THE CAREER HISTORY RESEARCH

Against this background of change in research focus on teachers and teaching, of renewed interest in interactionist theoretical perspectives influenced by political, economic and social constraints, I began a study of teachers' careers. In 1984 I undertook a statistical analysis of men and women teachers' posts and positions in one midlands local education authority and using Teachers' Service Cards<sup>1</sup> as the data source. Analysis of this data (Evetts, 1986) showed important differences in the promotion achievements of men and women in teaching and I decided that career patterns represented a crucial difference which needed further

exploration. It seemed that attitudes to and experiences of career were likely to be an important part of any explanation of differences in career achievements between men and women teachers.

In 1985, I began a study of the career histories of a group of married women primary and infant headteachers. I decided to study women's careers since I hoped that such a concentration of focus would enable me to understand the range and diversity amongst women themselves. I also decided and for similar reasons to concentrate on primary and infant teachers. There was considerably less sociological research on primary teachers careers and yet this was the teaching sector where women teachers greatly outnumbered men (Acker, 1987, 1989). As the research progressed, it became clear that primary teaching was a different sort of occupation in many important respects from secondary teaching. It seemed prudent, therefore, to concentrate the focus of research on women primary teachers with the intention of exploring and understanding their career patterns and experiences.

The career history study was based on interview data (tape-recorded and then transcribed) from twenty-five married women primary and infant headteachers. The group was small in number but the information gained was very full and detailed (the interviews took between two and a half and five hours each). The data could not be used to produce statistical generalizations but the group was large enough to show up significant similarities and differences in the women's experiences of career. All the women were or had been married although it was not possible to know their current marital status in advance of the interviews. Neither was it possible to know the extent of their family commitments and whether they had children. The women had at some stage in their careers opted for and been successful in achieving promotion in primary teaching in addition to

having and managing family responsibilities. They seemed (and indeed proved to be) good potential subjects for a study of women and career in that as married women they perceived themselves to have household and family responsibilities, and as headteachers they had achieved career progress and promotion.

The women were headteachers of primary and infant schools from two educational areas (one city, one more rural) of Penns County (a pseudonym). At first in the interviews it seemed surprising how many of the headteachers knew each other and how often the same names (of inspectors/advisers) and the same schools (as staging posts in the career) occurred in the heads accounts of career developments. As the data collection progressed, it became clear that an occupational network had to form part of the explanation of career development for these women. It is possible, however, that Penns County is different from other educational authorities in respect of the influence of inspectors/advisers on teachers careers and in respect of policies for teacher mobility and promotion. Winkley (1985) in his study of LEA inspectors and advisers has demonstrated the variety and diversity between local authorities in respect of their management styles and organizational arrangements for educational and teacher administration.

The women headteachers were selected from two contrasting educational areas (a city area, fifteen heads; a county area, ten heads). Prior to the local government re-organization of 1974, the city and the county had been separate educational authorities. Because of such administrative differences in the past and because inner city schools might prove to be different career building environments compared with more rural schools, it was decided to select the career history heads from the two different areas. In fact, the career patterns of the women headteachers



from the two areas showed remarkable similarities. In the chapters which follow, extracts from the career history accounts are used to discuss central themes. Pseudonyms have been used for places and for the headteachers names; their names are listed alphabetically in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1

Pseudonyms, Type of School and Age Category of  
Career History Headteachers

	Type of School	Age Category
Mrs Addison	Infants	45 - 54
Mrs Barnett	Primary	45 - 54
Mrs Butler	City Infants	45 - 54
Mrs Collins	City Infants	35 +
Mrs Curtis	City Primary	45 - 54
Mrs Dawson	City Infants	45 - 54
Mrs Dalton	Infants	45 - 54
Mrs Edwards	City Infants	35 - 44
Mrs Ellis	City Infants	45 - 54
Mrs Firth	City Infants	35 +
Mrs Grant	City Primary	35 - 44
Mrs Gilbert	City Primary	35 - 44
Mrs Holden	Primary	35 +
Mrs Howard	City Primary	45 - 54
Mrs Martin	Infants	35 - 44
Mrs Northfield	Infants	45 - 54
Mrs Pointer	Primary	45 - 54
Mrs Porter	City Primary	45 - 54
Mrs Spencer	City Infants	45 - 54
Mrs Stevenson	Infants	35 - 44
Mrs Tanner	City Infants	35 +
Mrs Taylor	City Primary	45 - 54
Mrs Thompson	Infants	35 - 44
Mrs Wetherby	Infants	35 +
Mrs Williams	City Infants	35 - 44

# THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

## (1) The Subjective Career

The career history study was guided by interactionist principles.

The interactionist concern with personal experience and with the

social construction of the 'subjective career' (Woods, 1987). The distinction between objective and

subjective dimensions of career had been suggested by Merton (1937). The

objective dimension consisted of the formal structure of the career, whereas

are those which constituted the career ladder. The subjective

dimension consisted of individual experience and changing values towards

the career. The interactionist perspective suggests that the career is a

process which is shaped by the interaction of the individual and the

career was 'the most subjective of all career concepts' (Merton, 1937, p. 400).

and interpreted the career as a process of development and change.

the things which constitute the career are those which are experienced by the

Sikes et al (1963) collected a series of articles which

by Jackson (1985) the career is the subjective experience of the

Mrs Addison which constituted the career ladder. The subjective

Mrs Barnett listed of individual experience and changing values towards

Mrs Butler how individuals experience the career. The

Mrs Collins City Primary 45 - 54

Mrs Curtis City Primary 45 - 54

Mrs Dawson City Infants 45 - 54

Mrs Dutton City Infants 45 - 54

Mrs Edwards City Infants 35 - 44

Mrs Ellis City Infants 45 - 54

Mrs Firth City Infants 55 +

Mrs Grant City Primary 35 - 44

Mrs Gilbert City Primary 35 - 44

Mrs Holden City Primary 55 +

Mrs Howard City Primary 45 - 54

Mrs Martin City Infants 35 - 44

Mrs Northfield City Infants 45 - 54

Mrs Pointer City Primary 45 - 54

Mrs Porter City Primary 45 - 54

Mrs Spencer City Infants 45 - 54

Mrs Stevenson City Infants 35 - 44

Mrs Tanner City Infants 55 +

Mrs Taylor City Primary 45 - 54

Mrs Thompson City Infants 35 - 44

Mrs Whetherby City Infants 55 +

Mrs Williams City Infants 35 - 44

in the work sphere. As Sikes et al have explained (1963 p. 2): 'The adult

career is usually the product of a dialectical relationship between self

## THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

### (i) The Subjective Career

The career history study was guided by interactionist principles. The interactionist concern with meaning, with experience and with the social construction of reality had resulted in the concept of 'the subjective career' (Woods, 1983). The distinction between objective and subjective dimensions of career had been suggested by Hughes (1937). The objective dimension consisted of the formal structure of posts, statuses and positions which constituted the career ladder. The subjective dimension consisted of individuals' own changing perspectives towards their careers; how individuals actually experienced having a career. The subjective career was "the moving perspective in which the person sees his life as a whole and interprets the meaning of his various attributes, actions and the things which happen to him" (Hughes, 1958, p. 409). In the research by Sikes et al (1985) and the collection of articles edited by Ball and Goodson (1985) the focus was the subjective careers of (predominantly) secondary teachers.

In the analysis of subjective careers, there is no prior assumption of promotion and progress; nor do job changes have to be regular or systematic and this is important for the study of women's careers. Also, the subjective career does not have to be centred solely on developments in the work sphere. As Sikes et al have explained (1985 p. 2): "the adult career is usually the product of a dialectical relationship between self and circumstances. As the result of meeting new circumstances, certain interests may be reformulated, certain aspects of the self changed or crystallized, and, in consequence, new directions envisaged". In the subjective career, 'career contingencies' (usually events in the personal

or private sphere which affect career) can become a major part of 'having a career' if that is how the individual perceives them.

In the subjective career, a career is an individual experience. This results in diverse perceptions of career and of work itself. Such individual perceptions might define career commitment as good classroom teaching rather than occupational mobility and might perceive career success as achieving a balance between work and family life rather than the achievement of promotion. The subjective career is not necessarily a smooth unilinear development involving promotion and increased responsibilities. Focusing on how people actually experience their work and their careers, subjective careers are not an orderly and regular progression up through a series of posts arranged in a hierarchy of increasing prestige, reward and responsibility. The subjective career focuses on individuals experiences; how they see the problems and the possibilities; how individuals cope with and negotiate constraints and make use of opportunities; the influences, the key events, the turning points, the decisions and so on. The subjective career provided the theoretical framework for the analysis of the career history material.

#### (ii) Life and Career Histories

The interactionist theoretical perspective had revived interest in certain, relatively neglected, methods of research. There had been a growth of interest in observation, in participant observation, in ethnography and in field and qualitative research (Croll, 1986; Burgess, 1982, 1985a, 1985b, 1985c); in oral history (Vansina, 1985), in autobiographical accounts (Burgess, 1984) and personal documents such as diaries and letters as sources of data (Plummer, 1983); and, more particularly for the career history study, there had been a revival of



interest in life history data and biography. The work of Faraday and Plummer (1979), Goodson (1981, 1983) and Bertaux (1981) had succeeded in re-establishing life history as an important source of data and other researchers such as Burgess (1983) and Beynon (1985) had shown how institutional history as well as life history affected the operation of a school and influenced the lives and careers of teachers.

However, researchers have been reminded (Sikes et al 1985, p. 14) that life or career history is not a complete set of tried and tested research techniques that can be taken up and adapted by any researcher. Certain aspects of the method, both its strengths and weaknesses, have been discussed (Bertaux, 1981; Faraday and Plummer, 1979; Goodson, 1981, 1983; Woods, 1985) and problems of validity and generalization have been considered (Denzin, 1970; Beynon, 1985; Smith et al, 1985). But Beynon (1985) has argued that the life history was particularly appropriate for the study of subjective careers. He claimed that the life history method could fill in the huge gaps in our understanding of career, professional and personal lives. He argued that life history data had advantages at three levels: subjective, contextual and evaluative. On the subjective level, life history data was uniquely placed to attempt to understand the individual's subjective reality because it emphasized the interpretations that people place on their everyday experiences as explanations of behaviour. Contextually, Beynon claimed the life history grounded the individual life in both the context of lived experience as well as the broader social and economic system in which individuals lived. The evaluative advantage of life histories was in reasserting the complexities of lived experience for individuals rather than focusing on mass phenomena which could only amount to simplifications and generalizations of such individual complexities. Beynon claimed that life histories could explore

and build up sensitizing hypotheses and concepts and that such data could correct, test and extend existing theory. He concluded (p. 177): "Life history material can tell us much about the socio-historical, institutional and personal influences on a career. It can help (the researcher) locate teaching in a wider temporal and inter-personal framework, incorporating external events that have diverted career trajectories (eg chance domestic factors or changes in the national economy) and pinpoint crucial benchmarks and phases in a career".

The career history study of the women headteachers was not a complete life history. It focused on the adult lives of the women. Some early biographical influences were explored but the interview data concentrated on the women's post-school experiences, at work and in their personal lives. For this reason, I refer to the headteachers interviews as career history rather than life history data. In the career history study my intention was to focus on the subjective careers of women in primary teaching. Career was to be an individual experience in which each woman's work and personal history was mapped out and different aspects of the career were interrelated. The women were asked about aims, ambitions, intentions and they were asked for their perception of what had happened and why. But in gathering information on twenty-five subjective careers, the intention was to be able to say something about women's subjective careers in general in primary teaching. By assimilating the individual narrative accounts it was possible to identify recurrent themes and general issues. It was possible to identify similarities and essential differences in the women's experiences of subjective career.

2. Internalised adjustment: in which the teacher

(iii) Strategies

In existing career history research on teachers and teaching it was

the first phase of the teaching career, teacher socialization (Lacey, 1977; Sikes, 1985, Cole, 1985), together with particular crises in the teaching career, both institutional and personal (Riseborough 1981, 1985; Measor, 1985; Beynon, 1985), that had received most attention. It was in such studies that the concept of 'strategy' was confirmed as a tool of analysis in interactionist research. Woods (1983 p. 9) described strategy as a central concept in the interactionist approach : "it is where individual intention and external constraint meet. Strategies are ways of achieving goals". The emphasis on external constraints had resulted in the use of the concept of a 'coping strategy' which considered how teachers had coped with certain constraints, with specific events or changes in their working situations (Hargreaves, 1978, 1979; Pollard, 1982).

Sikes et al (1985) summarized and reviewed the research that had been done on teacher strategies. In considering the socialization of teachers, Lacey (1977) had developed a model which categorized the alternative strategies which teachers could use to manage external constraints. Lacey had proposed three strategic orientations and these were described and developed further by Sikes et al (1985). The original three strategies were:

1. Strategic compliance; in which a teacher complies with a senior's definition of the situation, but holds private reservations.
2. Internalised adjustment; in which the teacher complies and changes his or her own views to believe it is for the best.

3. Strategic redefinition; in which the teacher seeks to change the situation.

Sikes et al (1985) claimed that between the two extremes, two and three, there were a variety of strategies of adaptation. They developed a fourth category of 'strategic compromise' which involved a mixture of internal adjustment and strategic redefinition which they defined as "finding ways of adapting to the situation that allows room for their interests, while accepting some kind of modification of those interests" (p. 238). This category of 'strategic compromise' seemed the most appropriate to represent the career experiences of the women in the career history study in their attempts to manage the dual expectations of family responsibilities and the commitments of their teaching work. Their strategies had involved a combination of internal adjustment and strategic redefinition. They had accepted certain elements in their situation like the priority of men's careers and the needs of babies and very young children for full-time mothering. But then by subsequently redefining their work and career goals and achieving promotion, they had in their various ways contributed to a strategic redefinition of women and career which might even make conditions and strategies easier for women who follow them.

One of the advantages of the concept of coping strategy is that it is necessary to specify what it is that has to be coped with (the constraint, the problem, the expectation) as well as the creative act of coping which individual teachers contrive and develop (Sikes et al, 1985). What is interesting is the teachers' views both of the nature of the problem and of the teachers management of that problem. Sikes et al claimed (p. 13)



that there had been no studies of strategy in respect of entire teacher careers and biographies and they made such a study a central feature of their own research.

Similarly in the career history study, career strategy became a central feature in the analysis. I was interested in how the women had perceived the constraints, the problem: the dual demands of teaching work and career, and of personal and family responsibilities. I was also concerned to discover the similarities and the differences in the strategies that had been devised by some married women which enabled them to fulfil perceived personal and family responsibilities and to develop their careers in primary teaching. How had these women perceived the constraints? How had constraints changed over the course of a career? Were there opportunities as well as constraints? How had some women negotiated and managed the constraints and made use of any opportunities to develop their careers in both work and family life? By examining the strategies by means of which these women had achieved certain goals, personal as well as career goals, or had coped with specific constraints, the emphasis could be on career as a process and a continually changing process as goals were redefined and specific constraints came and went. The strategies of these women were continually being developed and redefined as responsibilities and constraints were encountered, negotiated and managed. As problems and constraints varied over the course of their careers so did the strategies to cope with such contingencies also vary. But strategies were not to be understood only as clearly perceived and early formulated life plans and career intentions. Some individuals might see their careers in such a way. But for others, certainly a majority of the women in the career history study, career and personal responsibilities were in continuous process of change, negotiation and

compromise. Strategies were developed and decisions made sometimes through deliberate planning but, as often, strategies were devised through chance and coincidence, procrastination and serendipity.

#### FROM STRATEGIES TO CONTEXTS

But it was necessary to go beyond the women headteachers strategies. Each of the women had explained their subjective careers. They had contributed a narrative, an interpretation, a self-conscious retrospective account of what they considered important factors and influences in their own careers. Then, when the narratives of all the women were read together, it was possible to detect similarities and essential differences in their experiences of subjective career. But in addition these women had supplied information. They had told of how they had got their teaching jobs and their promotions; they had related how different were the working conditions for teachers in the 1960s, the 1970s and the 1980s. They had told of their own experiences of the labour market for primary and infant teachers and of their understanding of the influence of wider external conditions and of the promotion ladder in teaching on their subjective careers. They had supplied information about the contexts within which teachers work and their careers are constructed.

The women were the authorities on their own subjective careers; it was their interpretations of their experiences that were important. Then it was my job as researcher to identify from the subjective accounts, what were the interesting themes, the common experiences and the critical points of difference. Also, each woman could speak with authority on her own experience of the teaching labour market; each had got teaching work, changed jobs and achieved promotion. Using all the individual accounts it was then my task to identify and to explain how the mechanisms and processes in the teaching labour market operated to attach individuals to

jobs, and jobs to individuals. In addition, these women could (and did) explain how they felt the wider external conditions, of expansion and contraction of teaching, had affected their subjective careers. But in respect of external conditions the teachers accounts had to be supplemented by other sorts of data. It was necessary to consult official statistics to discover how external conditions had affected the numbers of teaching jobs at different levels; how local educational authorities had responded to demographic changes in numbers of primary pupils; how financial and political constraints had sometimes influenced the responses of educational authorities to changes in demand for and supply of teachers. The statistical data collected by local education authorities and compiled by the DES was used to describe the growth and contraction of the teaching labour force and of numbers of schools and numbers of pupils. Women headteachers accounts of their subjective careers could not be used to explain how and why teaching jobs were sometimes created and sometimes eliminated.

The women's subjective careers had to be situated in the wider contexts in which teaching careers are constructed. Career contexts are the background factors against which careers are developed. For any individual career builder the career contexts are given; individuals have to accept that these contexts are the structural conditions and negotiate and manoeuvre within them. On a different level of analysis, career contexts are being developed and changed by those in positions of power to influence such contexts. But for the purpose of understanding the influences on any one individual's career, the context factors have an existence, a reality and a degree of permanence.

In this study, career context factors on two levels of analysis will be considered and interrelated. The first level consists of career



conditions and promotion structures. Career conditions are factors such as economic prosperity or decline, political optimism or pessimism, the expansion or contraction of the education service and particularly of the teaching profession itself. The promotion structure is the salary and career ladder by means of which all teachers have a post and a position relative to other teachers. The second contextual level consists of the particular characteristics and processes in the labour market for primary teachers. Primary teachers will have developed a particular work culture. The labour market will have mechanisms for advertising posts, for matching applicants to posts and for selecting some individuals for promotion. Understanding such characteristics and processes is critical for an exploration of how external conditions come to affect the subjective careers of individual teachers.

The interrelationship between contexts and strategies will be emphasized. It is important to understand how the characteristics and processes in the labour market are affected by expansion and contraction; and how these characteristics and processes are negotiated by individual (women) teachers. How, then, have some women headteachers developed strategies to negotiate and manage the career contexts, the characteristics and processes in the primary teaching labour market under different external conditions and promotion structures?

#### (i) External Conditions and Promotion Structures

All teachers are greatly influenced by factors external to the occupation. The importance of economic, political and social factors have been emphasized by Ball and Goodson (1985) and by Sikes et al. (1985). The 1960s was a time of political optimism and economic expansion. This mood together with the post-war increase in the birthrate which was



maintained until the 1960s, meant that the educational system was expanding. The school-age population was increasing; schools were expanding and new schools were opened (see chapter two). But just as important was the general mood of optimism which meant that new ideas were welcomed and tried and teachers had scope and resources for experimentation (Richards, 1987; Lawn and Grace, 1987). Of particular importance to teachers careers was the fact that there was a shortage of teachers particularly in the infant sector, the sector where women have always well outnumbered men (Acker, 1987, 1989).

Most researchers are agreed that in the 1980s, the picture was very different. Teachers in the 1980s faced a general contraction of the education system. The reasons were complex but at the national level there was a reduction in economic prosperity, an increase in central control of the financing and the conduct of education and a fall in school rolls. At the local level, there was the amalgamation or closure of smaller schools, a cut-back in promotion posts and a general reduction in teacher mobility. These conditions, together with a general discontent among teachers in pursuit of pay claims and a new salary structure, made teaching a very different kind of occupation (Lawn and Grace, 1987). Thus, in the 1980s, there was general agreement that external conditions were producing a contraction of the education service, a smaller teaching profession and a reduction of promotion opportunities for teachers. For example, Sikes et al. (1985 p. 5) have commented:

"However, the disjunctive that probably runs deepest at the moment is that arising from the economic crisis, falling rolls and government policy which have promoted cuts in educational resources and blockages (and in some

cases stoppages) and re-routings in teacher careers which contrast greatly with the comparative days of plenty in the 1960s... Promotions were comparatively plentiful, over half of those in the late 1960s and early 1970s resulting from the creation of new posts."

In a similar way, Ball and Goodson (1985, p. 2) have described the changing educational conditions:

"Any attempt to portray the contemporary situation of teachers' work and teachers' careers must inevitably begin by recognising the changing context within which this is undertaken and careers constructed...

From the 1960s we have moved from a situation of teacher shortage and apparently infinite possibilities for the expansion of educational provision to, in the 1980s, a situation of teacher unemployment and contraction in provision, with one or two exceptions, across the system as a whole."

They go on to discuss changes in the conditions of teachers' work and the conception of a career in teaching since the 1960s. The consequences of these different external conditions were sometimes different for different groups of teachers. Partington (1976 p. 1X) has claimed that such different circumstances were likely to affect the status and promotion prospects of women teachers more than men:

"The acute shortage of women teachers over three decades has been a very powerful aid in improving their relative position in teaching, but in the 1970s the demographic and teacher supply situations have changed very dramatically. A falling birth rate and a larger number of qualified teachers available for appointment than ever before will have implications for all teachers, but women teachers and especially married women teachers may well find themselves more vulnerable than men."

There is general agreement that expansion or contraction of the teaching profession has dramatic effects on the careers of men and women teachers. In fact the consequences, particularly for women primary teachers, were not as straightforward as some researchers have assumed. For example, the promotion opportunities for women primary teachers were not necessarily increased in the expanded profession of the mid-1970s (see chapter two). However, the external conditions of expansion or contraction form a critical context in the analysis of women primary teachers' careers.

Changes in the promotion structure have also been significant for teachers careers. In teaching there is a national career structure which has been developed in stages as a result of changes in the Burnham Scales in 1956 and 1971 (Hilsum and Start, 1974) and by the Secretary of State for Education in 1987. In 1987, the promotion and salary structure was changed from a system of scaled posts and positions to a common scale with incentive allowances (see Table 1.2).

Table 1.2  
Salary and Promotion Structure for Teachers in England and Wales

1974-87		1987					
Burnham Scales		Transfer to Basic Scale: Primary and Secondary					
Primary	Secondary	Scale point on 30th September 1987					Scale point on Basic Scale* on 1st October 1987
Scale 1 15 incremental salary points	Scale 1 15 incremental salary points	Scale 1	Scale 2	Scale 3	Scale 4	Senior Teacher	
Scale 2 11 incremental salary points	Scale 2 11 incremental salary points	0-2					1
Scale 3 10 incremental salary points	Scale 3 10 incremental salary points	3-4	0				2
*	Scale 4 8 incremental salary points	5	1				3
	Senior Teacher Scale	6	2				4
	8 incremental salary points	7-8	3-4				5
	(Deputy Head	9-10	5-6	0			6
	(Headteacher	11-12	7-8	1-2			7
		13-14	9-10	3-4			8
		15	11	5	0		9
				6	1		10
				7-10	2-8	0-8	11
							Deputy Head) Salary Headteacher) according to School Group (1-14)
*Less than 1% of primary teachers are Scale 4 and Senior Teachers		*Plus five Incentive Allowances (at rates A-E) for teachers fulfilling certain criteria					

Source: Adapted from DES (1987)



The Burnham Scales which were in operation when the career history study was conducted, consisted of four salary scales plus senior teacher, deputy and headteacher scales (see the lefthand side of Table 1.2). In 1987, these were replaced by a Basic Scale for all teachers, apart from deputies and heads, and with a system of Incentive Allowances to be paid to teachers undertaking extra responsibilities. The transfer arrangements from Burnham to Basic Scale are shown in Table 1.2. In primary teaching there have always been fewer layers or levels (fewer incentive allowances) in the promotion structure than in secondary teaching and in general there has been less formalization of the career structure for primary teachers. It has been more common for primary teachers to 'omit' promotion steps and to move straight from scale one posts to deputy head positions (see Mrs Northfield's account and Evetts, 1987).

The significance of the promotion structure for teachers careers has been studied in the past in terms of career paths or career routes (Hilsum and Start, 1974; Lyons, 1981). The study of career routes involves the analysis of the various ways in which (sometimes large) samples of teachers have changed their jobs or remained in one job, have received promotion or not, over the course of their working lives. Such analyses can illuminate the different ways in which teachers have achieved a promotion position, say in management. It can also indicate the proportions of teachers achieving promotion positions and the characteristics of the 'successful' in comparison with the 'unsuccessful' in promotional terms.

There are a number of comments that could be made about such research but two are particularly important. Firstly, there is an implicit assumption that all teachers want promotion and desire to achieve the highest positions they are capable of. Secondly, there is a further assumption that teachers are totally rational in plotting their 'career

maps' (Lyons, 1981). This results in a deterministic or prescriptive model of career intentions. It is assumed that all teachers are single-minded in their career objectives and that although they might be differently informed as to the correct routes and procedures and differently equipped with promotional qualities and achievements, nevertheless they will work consciously and purposefully towards the promotion goal.

In the study of women's careers particularly, and the careers of many men, such assumptions can be misleading. It should not be assumed at the outset that all teachers want promotion (Bennet, 1985). Neither should it be assumed that women teachers who break their teaching service, in order to care for their own children, have 'imperfect' or 'interrupted' careers just because their careers do not match up to an assumed model of continuous service. It should not be assumed that careers are only concerned with developments in the paid work sphere. Evidence is increasing (see chapter eight) that men as well as women are concerned to improve the quality of their personal lifestyles outside rather than within work (Robertson, 1985; Scase and Goffee, 1989). For women (and for men) public and private worlds need to be incorporated into our understanding of what it means to 'have a career'.

The impact of changes in the salary and promotion structure together with changes in external conditions of expansion or contraction of the teaching labour force, are examined in chapter two. The interrelationship of changes in career contexts and teachers career strategies will be a continuing theme.

## (ii) Labour Market Characteristics and Processes

Recent studies of teachers careers have recognised the importance of

external factors such as political and economic conditions and expansion or contraction of the teaching labour force. But such studies have largely ignored the second kind of context factor, namely those characteristics peculiar to an occupation; that is the characteristics of and processes in the labour market for primary teachers. The distinctive characteristics of the labour market for primary teachers is a crucial intermediate dimension. Without it, we are no closer to an understanding of how particular external conditions actually bring about increased or reduced career opportunities for teachers. It is in the primary teaching labour market that expansion is converted into increased career opportunities for some individuals. Through certain characteristics, mechanisms and processes, the labour market translates favourable or unfavourable external conditions into career opportunities and constraints which have to be taken up, negotiated and managed by individuals.

What has been neglected so far, therefore, in research on primary teachers careers, is any analysis of the labour market for primary teachers. Such an analysis is attempted in chapter three. The work culture of primary teaching is described and the characteristics of primary teaching as an occupation distinct from other teaching work and other white collar occupations and professions is demonstrated. Then the processes that operate in the primary teaching labour market are described. These processes operate to control and manage the distribution of teachers between different schools and teaching posts at different levels. By examining the processes which determine the attributes that are important for promotion or stability in the teaching career, it will be possible to explain how the different external conditions of expansion and contraction are worked out in the lives and careers of individual teachers.



The characteristics of and processes in the labour market for primary teachers will also be an on-going theme. Of particular importance is how women primary teachers negotiate the constraints and make use of the occupational advantages of primary teaching in constructing their careers. Also, the ways in which the mechanisms and processes of the labour market are modified under different external conditions of expansion or contraction will be considered. Thus, external conditions and labour market characteristics and processes constitute the contexts and will form the backcloth against which to set the career strategies of women primary teachers.

The issue of women and career in primary teaching is complex. In the chapters which follow an attempt will be made to analyse career contexts and strategies and to show the interrelations between them. The women headteachers accounts of their experiences will be used to demonstrate how some women see their teaching work, their careers and the strategies they developed during their working lives. Their accounts also illustrate the promotional chances and disincentives, the constraints and opportunities in the primary teaching labour market; and they show how these women experienced the different external conditions of expansion and contraction and the changes to the promotion structure for primary teachers. But external career conditions and the promotion structure for primary teachers require a different kind of analysis and this is done in the next chapter.



## Chapter 2

### CAREER CONDITIONS AND PROMOTION STRUCTURES

#### NOTES

- The importance of factors at the macro level of analysis for teachers' careers and teachers' work is usually acknowledged (Ball and
1. From 1962 until the 1980s when individual local educational authorities moved teachers records on to computing storage facilities, data on teachers in an LEA's employ was recorded on Teachers Service Cards. These cards were kept by Teachers Sections of LEA's on behalf of the Department of Education and Science and were used by the LEA in the calculation of teachers' salary entitlements. The cards were records of teachers salaries, scale positions and school changes over their teaching careers since they first entered teaching. When teachers changed jobs and moved to new LEA's the Service Cards went with them. Once a year these cards were used by the DES to compile its statistics on Teachers in Service in England and Wales.

This chapter will consider such structural issues and will assess the significance of such factors in providing the context within which teachers work. The career conditions and promotion structures for primary teachers will be examined. The changes in numbers of primary teachers from the 1950s to the 1980s will be analysed and gender differences in the experience of expansion and contraction will be assessed. Then the promotion structure for primary teachers will be examined and gender differences in the distribution of promotion paths will be considered.

## Chapter 2

### CAREER CONDITIONS AND PROMOTION STRUCTURES

The importance of factors at the macro level of analysis for teachers' careers and teachers' work is usually acknowledged (Ball and Goodson, 1985; Sikes et al., 1985). Such factors include expansion or contraction of the numbers of teachers as a result of demographic changes in the size of the school age population or more general changes in the financial provisioning of teaching posts. A related factor is the general mood of optimism or pessimism amongst teachers which results in part from the respect and status attaching to teaching and which is reflected in the relative salary position of teachers compared with other professions and occupations. In addition, there is the salary and promotion structure itself. This consists of the framework of posts and positions through which teachers move as their careers develop and their experience grows. Changes in the salary and promotion structure for teachers are important in altering the routes and the paths by means of which teachers develop, understand and interpret their careers.

This chapter will consider such structural issues and will assess the significance of such factors in providing the context within which teachers work. The career conditions and promotion structures for primary teachers will be examined. The changes in numbers of primary teachers from the 1950s to the 1980s will be analysed and gender differences in the experience of expansion and contraction will be assessed. Then the promotion structure for primary teachers will be examined and gender differences in the distribution of promotion posts will be considered.

## CAREER CONDITIONS

Within primary education, there are different types of school and the differences must be clarified since they have important consequences for the careers of men and women primary teachers. Teachers in primary schools teach children from ages five to eleven when the children transfer to the secondary or comprehensive school and such a school will have one head and deputy post. The primary school might also have a nursery in which case the school will admit children from age three or four. But in some local authority areas and districts, primary education is carried out in separate infant (ages five to seven) and junior (ages seven to eleven) schools and although such separate schools might be on the same site or at least geographically very close, the schools will be separate establishments and have separate head and deputy headteacher posts. Separate infant schools might also have nursery units and these would be combined infant and nursery schools with one headteacher; alternatively (although less common) the nursery school might be a totally separate unit thus resulting in two headteacher posts. This diversity of school provision is further complicated because in some areas local authorities operate first (ages five to nine) and middle (ages nine to thirteen or fourteen) schools. In the presentation of DES statistics, middle schools are separated into 'middle deemed primary' and 'middle deemed secondary' schools. Only 'middle deemed primary' schools are included in this discussion. Again, with separate first and middle schools, this means separate headship and deputy posts.

In general then the term 'primary education' refers to education in all such schools: the inclusive primary, the separate infant and junior, and the separate first and middle-deemed-primary schools. It must be

remembered, however, that the differences between local authority areas in their use of separate or inclusive primary schools, can have important career consequences for men and women teachers. All-inclusive schools automatically reduce the number of management (i.e. headship) posts available for teachers who want promotion. Where there are no separate infant or nursery schools, this reduces the chances for women teachers of securing a headship post.

The distribution of teachers in different kinds of schools in primary education, by scale position in 1987 and by gender, is given in Table 2.1. It is important to note from this table that primary teaching is work in which women teachers well out-number men. According to Table 2.1, 79% of primary teachers are women. It is also important to note the overwhelming preponderance of women in infant and nursery schools (98% and 99% of teachers are women in these schools). However, what is immediately striking, are the gender differences in scale positions of men and women primary teachers. In an occupation which is 79% female, women constitute only 47% of primary headteachers whereas women's share of scale one full-time teaching posts is 94%.

	Head Teachers		Deputy Headteachers	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Nursery	3	163	1	163
Infants	72	3,043	76	2,878
First Schools	793	1,833	463	1,693
Junior + Infants	7,330	3,306	4,213	4,926
First and Middle	245	129	196	179
Junior	2,376	681	1,612	1,200
Middle School Primary	467	126	303	213
Intermediate and Visiting	96	72	13	8
Total	11,572	10,167	7,159	11,251
Percentages	53.2	46.8	35.9	64.1



TABLE 2.1

FULL-TIME TEACHERS IN MAINTAINED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND AND WALES, 1987 (PROVISIONAL)  
SCALE POSITION BY SEX AND TYPE OF SCHOOL

	Head Teachers		Deputy Headteachers		Second Master/ Mistress Senior Teacher Scale 4		Scale 3		Scale 2		Scale 1		Total		Total	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	% Men	% Women
Nursery	3	588	1	163	-	2	-	8	2	292	10	587	16	1,640	1.0	99.0
Infants	72	3,043	76	2,878	2	13	22	685	103	9,032	109	8,925	384	24,576	1.5	98.5
First Schools	793	1,853	463	1,693	9	22	220	1,070	448	6,549	200	6,442	2,133	17,629	10.8	89.2
Junior + Infants	7,500	3,706	4,215	4,926	75	133	1,652	4,517	4,585	25,258	1,876	26,534	19,903	65,074	23.4	76.6
First and Middle	245	120	196	170	9	9	162	402	250	1,435	103	1,222	965	3,358	22.3	77.7
Junior	2,376	662	1,812	1,200	42	67	1,610	2,373	2,727	8,756	922	6,431	9,489	19,489	32.7	67.3
Middle deemed Primary	487	120	393	213	26	21	512	592	755	2,098	248	1,554	2,421	4,598	34.5	65.5
Unattached and Visiting	96	75	13	8	98	79	161	371	176	770	92	662	636	1,965	24.5	75.5
Total	11,572	10,167	7,169	11,251	261	346	4,339	10,018	9,046	54,190	3,560	52,357	35,947	138,329		
Percentages	53.2	46.8	38.9	61.1	43.0	57.0	30.2	69.8	14.3	85.7	6.4	93.6	20.6	79.4		

Source: DES (1987 provisional) Statistics of Education, Teachers. Table B129.

TABLE 2.2

Since the 1950s, primary teaching has undergone a number of structural changes. These changes have been of two main types. The first was the expansion and later contraction in size of primary education in general and the numbers of primary teachers in particular. The second was the successive changes to the career structure introduced in 1956, 1971 and 1987. These two kinds of changes will be considered separately.

### Expansion and Contraction

The 1960s have been variously described, but there is general agreement that as far as (primary) teachers are concerned these were the halcyon days. In fact in terms of primary pupil numbers and numbers of local education authority primary schools, nationally, the mid-1950s were the peak years. Table 2.2 gives the statistics of numbers of pupils and numbers of schools and Table 2.3 gives numbers of full-time nursery and primary teachers at five year intervals from 1950 to 1985 and the more recent statistics available.

\* After and including 1970, figures include 'aided' primary.

Source: DES (1960; 1970; 1985; 1988) Statistics of Education, Schools

TABLE 2.2

**FULL-TIME PRIMARY PUPILS AND MAINTAINED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN  
ENGLAND AND WALES: FIVE YEAR INTERVALS 1950-1985 (AND 1988)**

	Numbers of full-time Primary Pupils	Numbers of maintained Primary Schools
1950	3,955,472	23,133
1955	4,600,862	23,664
1960	4,201,123	23,488
1965	4,273,101	22,882
1970*	4,912,874	23,060
1975	5,097,329	23,256
1980	4,207,327	21,214
1985	3,540,252	19,716
1988	3,618,300	19,319

\* After and including 1970, figures include 'middle deemed primary'.

Source: DES (1960; 1970; 1985; 1988) Statistics of Education, Schools

As far as primary pupil numbers are concerned, these have averaged around 4.3 million over the forty year period. There was a fall in the early 1960s and then a rise to an all-time high of 5 million pupils in the mid 1970s. Then primary pupil numbers fell until the mid 1980s to 3.5 million which was the lowest for the forty year time series. The most recent figures show numbers of primary pupils to be increasing again.

The number of primary schools has shown more fluctuation. The largest number of schools were recorded in the 1950s (23,664 schools in 1955). Subsequently the number fell (to 22,882 schools in 1965) although rising again in the mid 1970s to 23,256 schools. In the 1980s there has been a steady reduction (to 19,716 schools) in 1985, a reduction which is continuing (19,319 schools in 1988), the lowest in the forty year time series. The total number of schools is important in discussing primary teachers careers since it indicates the growth or reduction in numbers of headteacher and deputy head posts (one of each per school) and other promotion posts available. It is interesting to note that in the most recent figures (1988), the number of primary schools is still falling, probably through closure and the amalgamation of smaller schools, even though the numbers of primary pupils is increasing and is projected to go on increasing.

\* Includes nursery.

Source: DES (1960; 1970; 1980; 1985; 1987 provisional) Statistics of Education, Teachers.



TABLE 2.3

FULL-TIME TEACHERS IN MAINTAINED NURSERY AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN  
ENGLAND AND WALES: FIVE YEAR INTERVALS 1950-1985 AND 1987 (PROVISIONAL)

	Nursery	Primary	Total
1950		130,412*	130,412
1960	848	142,695	143,507
1965		144,921*	144,921
1970	911	162,376	163,287
1975	1,412	200,860	202,272
1980	1,732	195,495	197,227
1985	1,686	169,675	171,361
1987	1,656	172,620	174,276

Gender Differences

\* Includes nursery.

Source: DES (1960; 1970; 1980; 1985; 1987 provisional) Statistics of  
Education, Teachers.

However, when we consider how this expansion and contraction in  
primary teaching affected men and women teachers, some interesting  
differences emerge (Table 2.4). This is demonstrated if we compare the  
different growth and contraction rates for men and women primary teachers.  
From the lowest to the highest years, 1950 and 1975, women primary  
teachers increased by 65% (from 94,894 to 155,864 teachers) whereas men

The total numbers of full-time nursery and primary teachers shows a similar pattern. The number of teachers had been increasing since 1950; gradually until 1970 and then dramatically until 1975. By 1985 the number of full-time nursery and primary teachers had fallen back to approximately the early 1970's figure although the latest figures indicate a small upturn in numbers. In general, then, over the whole of England and Wales, primary teaching was expanding until the late 1970s and the greatest increases were in the early 1970s. From 1980 to 1985, there was a national reduction of 25,866 teaching posts in primary education although more recent figures indicate a return to modest growth of primary teacher numbers. The most important reason for these changes in size was demographic, namely the fluctuating birth rate which brought 5 million pupils into primary schools in the mid-1970s and only 3.5 million in the mid-1980s. But the way these expanding or declining numbers of pupils were accommodated in primary schools depended on political and administrative decisions at the national and local level. Sometimes school rolls and class sizes were increased or reduced; sometimes new classes were created and new schools were opened or classes and whole schools were amalgamated and closed.

### Gender Differences

However, when we consider how this expansion and contraction in primary teaching affected men and women teachers, some interesting differences emerge (Table 2.4). This is demonstrated if we compare the different growth and contraction rates for men and women primary teachers. From the lowest to the highest years, 1950 and 1975, women primary teachers increased by 65% (from 94,594 to 155,864 teachers) whereas men

primary teachers increased by 30% (from 35,818 to 46,408 teachers). Then, from the highest to the more recent years, 1975 and 1985, numbers of women primary teachers have been reduced by 14% (155,864 to 133,691) whereas numbers of men primary teachers have been reduced by 19% (46,408 to 37,587). It would seem, therefore, that women benefitted more than men

primary teachers from the expansion of primary teaching posts and also that women teachers have not been as badly affected as men primary teachers by the cut back in primary posts. However, this is in terms of numbers of primary teachers only and gives no indication of promotion opportunities.

	Men	Percentage	Women	Percentage	Total Numbers
					130,412
					143,507
					144,921
1970	40,904	25.1	122,303	74.9	163,207
1975	46,408	22.9	155,864	77.1	202,272
1980	45,092	22.9	154,135	77.1	199,227
1985	37,587	21.9	133,691	76.1	171,278
1987	35,947	20.6	138,329	79.4	174,276

Source: DES (1960; 1970; 1980; 1985; 1987 provisional)

Statistics of Education, Teachers.

TABLE 2.4

NURSERY AND PRIMARY TEACHERS IN ENGLAND AND WALES,  
FIVE YEAR INTERVALS 1950-1985 AND 1987 (PROVISIONAL):  
NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF MEN AND WOMEN

	Men		Women		Total Numbers
	Number	Percentage of Men	Number	Percentage of Women	
1950	35,818	27.5	94,594	72.5	130,412
1960	36,766	25.6	106,741	74.4	143,507
1965	36,226	25.0	108,695	75.0	144,921
1970	40,984	25.1	122,303	74.9	163,287
1975	46,408	22.9	155,864	77.1	202,272
1980	45,092	22.9	152,135	77.1	197,227
1985	37,587	21.9	133,691	78.1	171,278
1987	35,947	20.6	138,329	79.4	174,276

Source: DES (1960; 1970; 1980; 1985; 1987 provisional)

Statistics of Education, Teachers.



The different effects of expansion and contraction on men and women primary teachers is also demonstrated in the statistics relating to part-time teachers in primary education. One of the characteristics of the primary teaching labour market is that there are opportunities for married women to return to their teaching work as part-time and/or supply teachers for a period usually when they are caring for their own young children at home. The availability of part-time and supply work can be regarded as an indicator of the extent to which opportunities are available to married women to enable them to maintain their career commitment by seeking to combine paid work with their family responsibilities. Teaching is perhaps unique among white collar and professional occupations in the extent to which there are opportunities for women to fulfil a part-time teaching commitment when their family responsibilities are heavy. But part-time teaching posts are assumed to have been one of the casualties of the reduction in teaching posts in the 1980s.

	1962	1965
Women	8,411	13,793
Men	428	465
Total: Nursery and Primary	8,839	14,258
Total: Nursery, Primary and Secondary	21,131	31,572
Primary Part-Timers as percentage of all part-timers	41.6%	46.3%

TABLE 2.5

**PART-TIME TEACHERS IN MAINTAINED PRIMARY (INCLUDING NURSERY) SCHOOLS  
1962-1985 AND 1989 (PROVISIONAL)**

	1962	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1989
Women	8,411	13,788	19,580	21,361			
Men	428	466	572	574			
Total: Nursery and Primary	8,839	14,254	20,152	21,935	16,426	17,750	23,692
Total: Nursery, Primary and Secondary	21,131	30,772	38,096	42,164	33,143	34,855	44,841
Primary Part-Timers as percentage of all part-timers	41.8%	46.3%	52.9%	52.0%	49.6%	50.9%	52.8%

Source: DES (1970; 1980; 1985; 1989 provisional) Statistics of Education, Teachers. Table B133.

The statistics in Table 2.5 indicate that part-time primary teaching is a feature of significance to women (rather than men). The DES abandoned differentiating the gender of part-time teachers after 1975, but when statistics were available, men never constituted more than 5% of part-time primary teachers and were usually between 2 and 3% of the part-time primary teaching labour force only. DES statistics on part-time teachers are not available before 1962. But it is interesting to note that in the period of expansion of numbers of primary teachers (1962-1975), the part-time component was growing fastest, by 148%. Also, the reduction in part-time primary teaching posts was not as drastic as was sometimes assumed. There was a 25% drop in part-time teachers from 1975 to 1980, but the numbers of these posts subsequently increased again and is now higher than ever. It should be noted that part-time primary teachers have been an increasing proportion of all part-time teachers and are now about 50% of all part-timers. It is also important to bear in mind that there are significant variations between local educational authorities in the extent to which numbers of part-time teachers were expanded and reduced. In addition, in terms of the discussion later, it is necessary to remember that generally part-time teachers, particularly in the primary sector, have been paid as scale one, now basic scale, teachers only.

In general, then, it is possible to demonstrate that the picture of educational expansion usually attributed as a 1960s feature, is rather a 1970s feature, certainly as far as numbers of primary teachers are concerned, although the biggest growth in pupil numbers did occur in the late 1960s. But most important for primary teachers careers is the number of primary, junior and infant schools since it is this which determines the numbers of deputy and headship posts available. The largest numbers

of primary schools were recorded in the 1950s (23,664 schools in 1955) not in the 1960s or 1970s. In fact, the number was reduced in the 1960s (to 22,882 schools), rising again in the mid 1970s (to 23,256 schools). Then the numbers fell again in the 1980s (to 19,716 schools) and numbers are still reducing (19,312 in 1988). Also, for primary teachers careers, it is important to remember that at the level of individual local educational authorities, there were important differences in the extent to which new primary (or separate infant and junior, or lower and middle) schools were opened or existing schools were expanded.

In the primary sector, then, there was no tremendous increase in numbers of schools in the 1960s or 1970s which would have resulted in an expansion in numbers of primary promotion posts (head and deputy positions). Rather, the number of schools was fluctuating, any increases were modest and, in fact, numbers never reached the peak 1950s figure. The biggest expansion of primary teaching posts took place in the early 1970s. But without other significant changes, expansion alone (with no increase in promotion posts) would have represented a worsening of career opportunities for primary teachers.

## PROMOTION STRUCTURE

The specific salary levels and the structure of positions in the promotion hierarchy for all teachers (primary and secondary) were decided by the Burnham Committee from 1919 until 1987. In 1987, faced with divisions among teachers unable to reach agreement, the Secretary of State for Education abolished Burnham and imposed a revised teaching career structure. The system of scaled posts and positions revised in 1971 was replaced in 1987 with a common basic scale and incentive allowances for



additional responsibilities and special skills (see Table 1.2 in chapter 1). The separate salary scales for headteachers and deputies remained.

A history of the Burnham settlements in respect of teachers career structures up until the early 1970s was outlined by Hilsum and Start (1974, pp. 25-35) although they could not effectively deal with the changes introduced in 1971. The most recent change, in 1987, has yet to be fully examined in terms of the consequences for primary (or indeed secondary) teachers careers.

The history of the recent changes to the career structure in the teaching profession as a whole has involved, over a period of 30 years, increasing the number of steps or layers in the promotion ladder. Thus, before 1956, the only promotion statuses open to a teacher were a post of special responsibility or a headship (Hilsum and Start, 1974: 26). The 1956 agreement added three main types of post: graded posts (three levels, scales I, II and III), head of department and deputy head. Hilsum and Start (1974, p. 31) claimed that:

"The crucial point was that from 1956 a teacher could see his (sic) prospects in terms of a series of fairly well-defined stages, each of which, if reached, conferred upon the teacher not just financial rewards but also recognition of his status level in the professional hierarchy."

The 1971 settlement introduced further refinements. Deputies, as well as heads, were to have separate scales. Other teachers were to be paid according to one of five scales (later reduced to four). Scale one

was the starting scale and this scale had 15 points. Scales two to five (or four) were promotion scales. Second master/mistress posts were retained and a new post of senior teacher was created, these to be awarded only in the largest (therefore secondary) schools. This increasingly hierarchical career structure was justified as offering opportunities for all teachers. Thus, Roy (1983, p. 78-9) noted:

"... the advocates of the basic scale faded away, to be replaced by new leaders wanting a fair deal for every teacher, linking promotion to different salary scales and thus enabling every teacher to see clearly the existence of a promotion ladder."

However, such conclusions were reached in respect of teachers in general and this usually meant the secondary (as opposed to the primary) teacher. The consequences of these changes in the career structure for primary and infant teachers were somewhat different. Because primary (and particularly infant) schools are smaller and their pupils necessarily younger, and because of the operation of the unit total system<sup>(1)</sup> in determining the numbers of promotion posts available in schools, this range of status levels was never available for teachers in primary education. For primary teachers, a typical career route might have been from scale one to two; a few might have proceeded to scale three if a school were large enough but most would have moved straight to a deputy and then to a headship. The 1971 settlement represented increased career opportunities for primary teachers compared with the situation prior to 1956 when only headship statuses were available. But for primary

teachers, the layers in the promotion ladder were not significantly different after 1971 to what they were after 1956. Thus, after 1956, graded posts (scale 1) deputy and headship posts were available. After 1971, scale two, (a few scale three), deputy and headship posts were available as staging posts in the primary teaching career. But for primary teachers, more than secondary teachers, promotion opportunities depended on numbers of primary and infant schools and therefore of primary and infant deputy and headship posts, not on increased numbers of promotion layers or levels.

### Gender Differences

From career opportunities generally in primary education, it is interesting to consider what the consequences of such changes have been for men and women primary teachers. Were there any significant gender differences in the achievement of promotion posts and how have any such differences changed over time? Table 2.6 summarizes the information available on the scale positions of men and women primary (including infant and nursery) teachers over the twenty-one year period 1966 to 1987 after which the scale promotion structure was abandoned. The move from 1966 to 1975 in the Table does mark a real change in the status levels since graded post 1 became scale 2. The scale posts in 1975 and 1987 are not equivalent to those in 1966.

**TABLE 2.6**  
**GRADES OF QUALIFIED FULL-TIME TEACHERS IN ALL MAINTAINED PRIMARY (INCLUDING NURSERY) SCHOOLS:**  
**MEN AND WOMEN (ENGLAND AND WALES) 1966, 1975, 1987 (PROVISIONAL)**

	MEN			WOMEN		
	1966	1975	1987	1966	1975	1987
Headteachers	11,979	13,565	11,572	11,129	10,171	10,167
Deputies	5,376	7,275	7,169	8,465	11,309	11,251
2nd Masters/Mistresses and Other Heads of Departments*	961	131	261	1,081	153	346
Graded Posts:						
Scale 3	17	1,546	4,339	19	2,470	10,018
Scale 2	142	15,833	9,046	152	56,254	54,190
Scale 1	4,250	7,886	3,560	6,739	74,725	52,357
Other Assistants+	12,873			71,311		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35,598</b>	<b>46,236</b>	<b>35,947</b>	<b>98,896</b>	<b>155,082</b>	<b>138,329</b>

\* After 1971 Scale career structure reorganized. After 1972 includes senior teachers and scale 4.

+ After 1971 Scale career structure reorganized. Assistant grade became scale 1.

Source: DES (1970;1980; 1987 provisional) Statistics of Education, Teachers.



The gender differences in the proportions of teachers on the basic scale have been marked over the period. In 1966, 62.6% of primary teachers were on the basic assistant grade (36.2% of men and 72.1% of women). In 1975, 41.0% of teachers were on the basic scale one (17.1% of men and 48.2% of women). In 1987, 32.1% of teachers were on the basic scale one (9.9% of men and 37.8% of women). So although the proportion of the primary teaching population on the lowest scale has been declining from approximately two-thirds in 1966 to less than one-third in 1987, the proportion of women at this grade has fallen from 72% to 38% whereas the proportion of men at this grade has fallen from 36% to 10%.

It does seem that the 1971 changes in the career structure were effective in increasing career opportunities for men primary teachers and to a lesser extent for women, in that after 1971 scale two (and to a lesser extent scale three) positions did become achievable steps in the promotions ladder. The growth in scale three posts should be noted. These represented 8.2% of all primary teaching posts in 1987 (12.1% for men and 7.2% for women) compared with 2% of all primary teaching posts in 1975.

The most significant gender difference, however, is in the extent to which men, compared with women primary teachers, achieve primary headships. For men primary teachers the career ladder has always been real in that approximately one-third of all men primary teachers are in primary headships. In 1966, 33.7% of all men primary teachers were heads; in 1975, 29.3%; and in 1987, 32.2% of men primary teachers were heads. The corresponding figures for women were: 1966, 11.3%; 1975, 6.6%; 1987, 7.3%. Thus, for men, the percentage of primary teachers who are in headships has remained at about 32% declining slightly over the period of expansion. But for women, the percentage who are in headships declined

more dramatically over the period of expansion and in 1987 was 7%.

It seems, therefore, that primary teaching has a career ladder to a headship post that is achievable by something like one-third of male teachers. But that this career goal is achievable by only 7% of female primary teachers currently, and the percentage declined over the period of expansion and supposedly of increased career opportunities. There are, however, additional points to be made. The headship posts which are occupied by women are predominantly headships of separate infant and nursery schools in contrast to the headships of separate junior and inclusive primary schools, which are predominantly male. Because of the operation of the unit total system and the smaller size of infant schools, these headships are less rewarding in terms of income and status than the headships of junior and primary schools. But, on the other hand, there are rather more infant headships. Some women achieve primary headships but it is interesting to note (Evetts, 1989a) that their route to such a headship will have been different. Whereas men might proceed directly to a deputy and then the headship of a primary school, most women primary heads will have proceeded via the headship of an infant school or will occupy the headship of a small rural primary school. The career routes to headship positions demonstrate important gender differences, therefore.

It should be noted also that for women, more so than men, there might be blockages in their career routes. Proportionately more women than men primary and infant teachers were on scale two. Table 2.6 cannot illustrate the movement in and out of scale positions but if the percentages at scale two are calculated, it might be significant that in 1987 25.2% of men teachers were on scale two whereas 39.2% of women teachers were on this scale. In addition, the deputy head position might also represent a significant sticking point in the careers of both men and

women. In 1987 19.9% of men teachers were deputies and 8.1% of women teachers, but the higher proportions of primary headships achieved by men (32.2%) compared with women (7.3%), results in the strong probability that women are more likely to remain at the deputy position than are men.

#### CAREER CONDITIONS AND PROMOTION STRUCTURES: GENDER DIFFERENCES

In conclusion it is necessary to state that in terms of the effects of different external conditions and the impact of changes in the promotion structure, the consequences for primary teachers careers were different from the consequences for secondary teachers. Generalizations about all teachers, therefore, are at best over simplifications and at worst are positively misleading. If researchers generalize about teachers and promotion (Hilsum and Start, 1974; Lyons, 1981; Roy, 1983) then important reservations need to be made about primary teachers. There are significant differences in the career structures of primary and secondary teachers and in the experiences of men and women teachers within those sections. In primary teaching, such differences have been demonstrated by examining the promotion structure and the effects of expansion and contraction on the distribution of promotion posts.

The primary teaching labour force is made up of 79% women and 21% men teachers (Table 2.4). In 1987, 32% of all teachers were on the basic scale one, 10% of men and 38% of women teachers (Table 2.6). However, the most significant gender difference is the extent to which men compared with women primary teachers are in primary headships. For men, the percentage who hold headship posts has remained around 30% (1987, 32.2% of men primary teachers were heads). While for women, the percentage who are in headship posts declined from 11.3% in 1966 to 7.3% in 1987.



It is also important to emphasize that expansion or growth of the teaching labour force does not necessarily mean any expansion of promotional opportunities in teaching. Certainly in primary education, if the number of schools and hence of head and deputy posts stayed much the same, then promotion opportunities are likely to be reduced as a result of expansion. Over the period of educational expansion in the 1960s and 1970s, nationally there were increases in the numbers of primary schools (and thus of primary headships) but these were only modest increases and it is important to remember that the situation at the local level was very variable. Also, it seemed that the promotional chances of women in primary teaching were reduced more than men's by expansion in the numbers of teachers. The increased demand for primary and infant teachers in the late 1960s and early 1970s which brought about the expansion of primary teaching, resulted in a tremendous increase in part-time primary teaching posts and an increase in scale one and scale two posts for women. But this was not accompanied by any increase in the proportion of women who occupied higher level promotion posts. Indeed the percentage of women teachers in primary headships was at its lowest point (6.6%) in the mid-1970s.

Further differences relate to the changes in the promotion structure and the effects for primary teachers in general and women primary teachers in particular. In primary teaching, changes in the career structure, brought in after 1971, expanded opportunities at the lowest levels of the promotion ladder, scale two and some scale three positions. But the proliferation of status levels that expanded career opportunities in secondary teaching did not apply in primary education. Primary teachers did not benefit to anything like the extent of secondary teachers from the increased number of status and promotion levels.



Primary teachers are more dependent than secondary teachers on the growth in numbers of schools rather than the growth in numbers of status levels, for their career opportunities. Thus the increasing numbers of women primary teachers in the late 1960s and 1970s came to occupy the lowest levels of the promotion ladder to a much greater extent than the increasing numbers of men during that period. Also, in the declining primary teacher numbers in the 1980s, the proportion of primary teachers who were men was at the lowest point for the 30 year period (20.6% in 1987, Table 2.4) and yet men's share of all primary headships was 53.2% (Table 2.1). On average, just below one-third of men primary teachers are in a headship post. This fell slightly (to 29%) in the mid-1970s in the period of expansion but in the contraction years of the 1980s, the figure was back to 32.2%.

It seems clear, therefore, that women teachers benefitted from the expansion of primary teaching only to the extent that they were able to enter teaching and return to their teaching work after a break in service more easily in the late 1960s and 1970s than in the 1980s. But in terms of promotion opportunities, women continued to occupy the lower ranks even in the expansion days of the 1970s. Nationally women's share of headteacher positions declined during the period of expansion. Both men and women primary teachers are dependent for increased promotion opportunities on increasing numbers of primary schools. Women are very dependent on the growth in numbers of separate infant schools. The expansion in numbers of schools was very variable between local educational authorities even when pupil numbers were increasing. Promotion opportunities in primary teaching, therefore, are dependent on local authority initiatives in coping with growing or declining pupil numbers. In the 1970s, some local authorities developed new schools while others

expanded existing schools. The extent to which local authorities favour separate infant and junior schools or favour the inclusive primary schools (or lower and middle schools) can have a dramatic impact on the promotion opportunities for men and women primary teachers. The situation is highly complex but in general, in promotional terms, primary teachers have benefitted less than secondary teachers from changes in the teaching career structure and women teachers have benefitted less than men teachers in terms of promotion opportunities from expansion of primary teaching.

#### Notes

1. The criteria for determining the responsibilities and the salaries of head teachers of schools of varying sizes and for deciding the number and type of promotion posts available in a school, are the number and age of pupils on roll. These are compounded into one basic operating principle called the 'unit total'.

Hilsum and Start (1974 p.307) explained the unit total system as follows:

"Each pupil under thirteen adds one-and-a-half points to the unit total, those aged thirteen to fifteen, two points, fifteen to sixteen, four points, sixteen to seventeen, six points and over seventeen, ten points."

The 'unit total' then determines the group to which a school is

allocated.

There are many more headships of primary and infant than of secondary schools because there are a larger number of primary and infant schools. But these headships are less rewarding in financial terms because of the unit total system and the smaller size of the primary and infant schools.

For the latest up-dating of the unit total system see DES, 1987, p. 28.

But an additional context is the primary teaching labour market itself. Analysis of the primary teaching labour market includes an examination of the characteristics of teaching as work, and of the processes which operate in the primary teaching labour market to fit individuals to jobs. The work culture of primary teaching and the accepted procedures for seeking and achieving promotion, have not been systematically analysed in studies of primary teachers' careers, although the work culture of primary teaching is now being considered (Pollard, 1989; Wias, 1989; Wias et al, 1989; Acker, 1990, forthcoming).

The characteristics of the labour market for primary teachers constitute factors at the intermediate level of analysis. In studies of teachers' careers such intermediate factors have tended to be neglected. The importance of factors at the macro level (external and organizational conditions and contexts) and at the micro level (the interpretations, actions and experiences of individuals) have been acknowledged, but there has been no analysis of how different external or structural conditions are operationalized and worked out within local labour markets to alter and affect the distribution of career opportunities for teachers. It is through certain of the characteristics of primary teaching as a job of work and through the generalized acceptance of certain procedures and processes for controlling and managing promotion that external conditions

### THE LABOUR MARKET FOR PRIMARY TEACHERS

The external conditions of expansion and contraction and the promotion structure specific to an occupation or profession such as primary teaching constitute contexts within which teaching careers are constructed. But an additional context is the primary teaching labour market itself. Analysis of the primary teaching labour market includes an examination of the characteristics of teaching as work, and of the processes which operate in the primary teaching labour market to fit individuals to jobs. The work culture of primary teaching and the accepted procedures for seeking and achieving promotion, have not been systematically analysed in studies of primary teachers careers, although the work culture of primary teaching is now being considered (Pollard, 1985; Nias, 1989; Nias et al, 1989; Acker, 1990, forthcoming).

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are converted into opportunities or constraints for teachers. The local primary teaching labour market has two distinct components which operate to control and to manage the distribution of teaching posts. The first are the general characteristics of primary teaching as a job of work. Some of the occupational characteristics of primary teaching are shared with other white collar occupations and professions, and others are unique to primary teaching. These characteristics will be considered as the occupational culture of primary teaching. The second component consists of the mechanisms and processes by means of which teachers are sorted out and distributed between different kinds of teaching and managerial posts. Certain attributes and qualities will be agreed on as important for promotion and progress in the teaching career and processes will operate to encourage some teachers and to discourage or impede others from seeking promotion. These processes will be considered as the internal labour market for primary teachers. By understanding the occupational culture and the operation of the internal labour market of primary teaching, it will be possible to begin to see how external structural factors are worked out in the lives and careers of individual teachers.

## THE OCCUPATIONAL CULTURE OF PRIMARY TEACHING

The study of the occupational culture of teaching was neglected for a long time in both educational and sociological research on teachers (Woods, 1980). Until the revival of interest in the 1970s into small-scale ethnographic research in classrooms and staffrooms, little was known about how teachers themselves saw their work; how they coped in classrooms and also in staffrooms, with pupils, with colleagues, with

officials and with parents. In other words we were largely ignorant about the work and day to day practices of teachers.

Interactionist theoretical perspectives brought such studies of classroom and staffroom survival in the 1970s and 1980s (Hargreaves D. 1980; Woods, 1979; Hargreaves A. and Woods P. 1984). It was recognised that teachers culture is a critical variable since it is the medium through which all educational changes and reforms must pass (Woods, 1980). Through their working practices, teachers shape, transform, adapt or resist educational innovations. It is necessary to understand, therefore, how teachers see their work and their careers and how they interpret the constraints and opportunities available to them in the conduct of their work and their careers in the classroom and in the school.

The study of the occupational culture of primary teaching has been largely neglected. Apart from some recent exceptions (Pollard, 1980; Nias, 1985, 1989; Acker, 1990, forthcoming), little was known about how primary teachers see their work and their careers, how they cope in the classroom and the staffroom, how they view their colleagues, parents and authority relationships and how they regard promotion in their careers.

In primary teaching, there are particular features of the school environment that influence the culture of such teaching work. Of particular importance is the fact that primary schools are small, considerably smaller than secondary schools. There is a great deal of variation and school size will range from at one extreme the all-inclusive primary and nursery school with upwards of six hundred pupils and around twenty-five to thirty staff to the separate nursery or infant school, or rural primary, with perhaps forty pupils and two teachers. But the comparatively small size of all such schools has several consequences for

the experience of work of the teachers.

In the career history study, the women heads talked about their work and how they organized their schools. Most of the heads considered that they knew their teachers well; their strengths and weaknesses in the classroom and the successes and disappointments in their personal lives. With smaller numbers of staff it is easier for staffrooms to become close-knit communities, though the possibilities of major rifts and disagreements and personal animosities are also greater. The heads in the career history study varied in the amount of classroom teaching which they undertook but most saw themselves as relief teachers to give their staff time to research and develop particular curricula areas. The encouragement of teamwork in smaller primary and infant schools has been described as one of the managerial tasks of primary headteachers (Taylor, 1976; Dockrell et al, 1986; Day, 1987). Thus, managerial post holders within primary schools (those receiving incentive allowances, deputy heads and heads) are still classroom teachers and hence are not far removed in responsibilities, status and salary terms from the basic scale teacher-workers. In smaller primary and infant schools, the potential is there for heads to work together with their teaching staff in a corporate and collegiate enterprise where the division of tasks is minimized, is shared or is rotated in order to give everyone necessary experience; though such potential is not always realised.

The closeness in relationships among teacher colleagues can also extend upwards to inspectors/advisers and downwards to pupils and their parents. The heads in the career history study claimed to welcome visits from the local advisers; sometimes the advisers were known as former headteacher colleagues. The attitudes of primary teachers themselves to such visits might be more ambivalent since advisers are also 'gatekeepers'

to career promotions. But in general there is more informality in the contacts between advisers, headteachers and teachers in primary schools than in secondary schools (Winkley, 1985) and this has consequences for the experience of teaching work of primary teachers. Similarly primary teachers know their pupils. They will usually teach one class for the whole of the working day, teaching all 'subjects' (with occasionally some exceptions such as PE and Religious Knowledge), and in most cases for a whole academic year. Such teachers know their pupils and in many instances also know the parents, the family background and circumstances of their pupils since current 'good practice' in primary education encourages a partnership between parents and teachers and welcomes parents into schools.

In terms of their teaching work and their expertise, primary teachers are generalists. In contrast to the subject or pastoral identities of secondary teachers, the primary teacher must have a breadth of knowledge and experience across age and subject boundaries. Primary teachers can specialize and with new collegiate models of management are now encouraged to specialize on a particular area (science in the primary school) or skill ('imaginative writing' or 'reading with understanding'). But primary staff are not subject specialists and teacher-identities will be school-based in contrast to the department or year allegiances that are a feature of the work of secondary teachers (Sikes et al., 1985).

In the past there were significant differences in the training and qualifications of primary and secondary teachers. Primary teachers qualified after a two-year college course and received a Certificate of Education. Secondary teachers have always been divided into the academic/graduate subject staff and the college trained and usually pastoral staff. Such training differences have been reduced as the



all-graduate profession is being achieved. But such divisions now reoccur in both the primary and secondary teaching professions. In primary teaching the division is substantially an age division between the older certificated teacher and the younger graduate entrant. In secondary teaching, the division remains between the academic graduate subject specialist and the more general pastoral orientated BEd teacher.

A further feature of major significance to the occupational culture of primary teaching is the predominance of women. According to DES statistics (see chapter two), in 1987 79% of all primary teachers were female and since 1950 this percentage has averaged around 75%. The proportion of female to male teachers is even higher for separate infant and nursery schools. In infant and nursery schools, teachers are almost exclusively female (98% of teachers in infants and 99% of teachers in nursery schools are women; see Table 2.1, chapter two). The gender differences between teachers in the conduct of their teaching work is as yet largely unexplored. But the predominance of women in primary teaching does have other effects on the work culture for such teachers. Separate infant (and to a lesser extent primary and junior staffrooms) are female occupational communities and such communities have different characteristics to male occupational communities. Women more than men bring the personal and private aspects of their lives into the conduct of their teaching work. Women share and cooperate over the carrying out of work, family and household responsibilities (Evetts, 1988b). Women develop and share coping strategies with other teachers. They consult and discuss their career strategies with female colleagues; they emulate role models and women teachers they admire (Delyon and Migniuolo, 1989).

These features of primary teaching as a job of work influence and affect the occupational culture of such teachers. The occupational

culture of any work consists of the generally accepted practices or ways of doing the job. In primary teaching, the work culture includes ways of behaving in classrooms and staffrooms and accepted practices regarding relations between colleagues, pupils and parents. In terms of what actually goes on in primary classrooms, the progressive/traditional dichotomy (Bennett, 1976; Sharp and Green, 1975), proved something of a red-herring in attempts to describe primary teachers work culture. It is clear that most primary teachers use a combination of techniques and styles. But the need to counter criticisms of some of the supposed consequences of the operation of so-called progressivism in primary classrooms (Delamont, 1987) has for a long time diverted educational researchers away from the task of describing work practices in the primary and infant school. Detailed ethnographic studies of primary and infant classrooms and staffrooms have yet to be undertaken (though see Pollard, 1985).

However, small size of schools, numerical predominance of women, close relations between colleagues and between teachers, heads and advisers, are some of the significant features of the work culture of primary teaching which can assist our understanding of primary teaching as work and as a career. Hargreaves (1980) has summarized three major themes around which the occupational culture of teachers can be described. These themes are status, competence and relationships. Using such a framework the occupational culture of primary teaching as distinct from secondary teaching can be described. Primary teachers have a generally lower status than their secondary colleagues. This is reflected in their social standing as teachers of young children, and is reinforced by their lack of a specific subject expertise. It has been argued in the past (Hoyle, 1969; Floud, 1961) that the predominance of women in primary teaching has also

affected its prestige and social status. But why this should be so was never adequately explained other than by the generally lower status attaching to women's work as compared with men's.

The distinctive competence of primary as compared to secondary teaching is best summed up as a general and pastoral rather than a subject and specialist competence. In the past and still to an extent today, the differences in the training and qualifications of the two types of teacher emphasized the divisions. The degree and the certificate were the distinctive hallmarks of the division of status and competence within the secondary and primary teaching professions. Competence can also be seen to be reflected in the control of access to a body of knowledge that is important and functional (M.F.D. Young, 1971). Here again subject specialists in secondary schools have acquired, are familiar with and can control access to a body of knowledge to which students and pupils aspire. Thus the physics teacher controls access to an esoteric body of knowledge which students need to achieve in order to gain a certificate. Against this the primary teacher, with generalist knowledge has no control over access or acquisition of such bodies of knowledge. Educated parents can and do teach the skills and the knowledge required by young children. At present primary teachers do not control access to national certification. However the proposals for compulsory testing of children at ages seven and eleven might affect their ability to control access to highly valued marks and grades and hence might affect their prestige and social standing in the eyes of parents and the community.

The relationships of the occupational culture of primary compared with secondary teaching are distinctive. The small size of schools and staffs means a closeness and a familiarity that is not often found in secondary schools. Primary teachers can substitute for one another in a



way that is impossible in secondary teaching. Primary teachers identify with their schools while secondary teachers continue to see themselves as subject or pastoral specialists. Cooperation is facilitated in small schools with few staff, and management and collegiate responsibility is easier to achieve. Obviously such closeness can be a disadvantage. It is almost impossible in a primary school for teachers to avoid or distance themselves from other teachers. Colleague control can sometimes mean colleague disapproval. An outcast teacher would find life intolerable in the close confines of the primary staffroom. However, in terms of primary teacher relationships, many questions need still to be asked. The gender imbalance in primary teaching staffs might have important, though as yet largely unexplored, consequences for colleague relationships. Are staffroom networks gender specific? What are the consequences when males are in a minority in staffrooms? How do headteachers, male or female, decide on promotion strategies for their staff and how in the new climate of teacher appraisal is gender likely to influence and affect such promotion decisions?

## THE INTERNAL LABOUR MARKET OF PRIMARY TEACHING

The concept of an internal labour market developed out of attempts by labour economists in the 1950s to analyse the constraints on free competition for and free movement of labour (Loveridge, 1983). But much of its significance has come from its use by radical or marxist economists to explain segmentation in labour markets in general. The labour market is seen as being made up of at least two segments: the primary sector, made up of jobs with stable earnings and employment prospects, and the



secondary sector of jobs offering only part-time or intermittent employment, relatively low earnings, no job security or promotion prospects. (The 'primary sector' of the labour market and the 'primary sector' of education is a potential source of confusion in the discussion which follows.) The analysis by Piore (1975) is the most popularly cited (Dex, 1985) and Piore introduced a further division within the primary sector of the labour market between the upper independent and lower subordinate primary sectors. The upper primary sector of the labour market was made up of professional and managerial jobs, with higher pay, mobility and turnover patterns. The lower primary sector of the labour market contained occupations with moderate levels of pay, with less variety in the content of their work and with less control and influence over the work of others (Dex, 1985, p. 132).

Then, according to Doeringer and Piore (1971), primary sector occupations develop internal labour markets where competition for promotion to the upper primary sector is restricted to those already in the primary sector occupation. This internal labour market thereby constitutes a career structure whereby some members can progress and achieve promotion in the career whereas others are left behind to occupy lower primary sector jobs.

Using such a model, teaching is a primary sector labour market occupation. It offers relatively high wages, good working conditions, responsibility and control over the work in the classroom and employment stability. In addition, teaching has its own internal labour market with a nationally recognized and locally operated career structure. Through the internal labour market some teachers are promoted into upper primary sector occupations (educational management) whereas others remain in lower primary sector jobs (classroom teaching). In the internal labour market

market? What attributes and qualities are necessary for promotion of teaching, competition for promotion is confined to those already qualified and employed as teachers. The headteacher position is located in the upper primary sector of the labour market since these posts involve management and administration, higher pay, more responsibility, variety and control over the content of their work, opportunities for individual initiative and decision-making and control over the organization of the work of other teachers and over their promotion prospects. Secondary schools have further forms of 'middle management'. But in infant and junior schools there is a starker divide between headteacher posts and others. Compared to heads, classroom teachers have less variety in their work, no control over other teachers and less opportunity for individual initiative beyond the classroom. Such positions are best located in the lower primary sector of the labour market.

However, there are certain gender-related characteristics of the primary and infant teaching labour force that have consequences for the internal labour market and the promotion prospects of women teachers. First although women teachers outnumber men, nevertheless men have a higher proportion of the headteacher positions (53%) and men predominate in the upper sector of the labour market for primary teachers. Secondly there are further significant gender differences within the upper sector. Women predominate as heads of infant and nursery schools, while men predominate as heads of primary and junior schools. Women have a virtual monopoly of the infant headteacher position. But because infant schools are smaller and their pupils necessarily younger, and because of the operation of the unit total system, these (female) infant heads are less well paid than most heads of junior and primary schools.

So what are the important features of the internal labour market for teachers in the primary school sector? What ideologies underpin the

market? What attributes and qualities are necessary for promotion from the lower to the upper sectors of the internal labour market and do such attributes affect men and women teachers equally? What are the mechanisms and processes by means of which promotion opportunities are controlled and distributed? Finally, how are the processes of the internal labour market modified under different external conditions of expansion or contraction? In order to begin to answer such questions, it is necessary to consider the ideologies that support promotion; the qualities deemed necessary for promotion; and the processes that operate in the internal labour market of primary teaching.

### **Beliefs About Promotion In Primary Teaching**

#### **Individual striving**

The first characteristic to consider are the various beliefs surrounding promotion in teaching and how such beliefs actually bring about acceptance of unequal opportunities. Crompton and Jones (1984) examined three organizations (banking, insurance and local government) to investigate differences in the characteristics of their internal labour markets. But there were common features as well. All three internal labour markets achieved control through compliance because employees were engaged in individualistic striving within the organization. Similarly for primary teachers, both men and women, the ideology is individualistic with an emphasis on equal opportunity and promotion for special merit and for taking on additional responsibilities. The belief system that supports the internal labour market of primary teaching involves the idea that men and women primary teachers begin their teaching careers with similar sorts of qualifications, attitudes and ambitions (Taylor and Dale,

1971; Hanson and Herrington, 1976; Lyons, 1981). Among young primary teachers, both men and women are thought to want interesting work, enjoy classroom contact with children, and have ambitions for more responsibility and for a career (Nias, 1981).

As careers progress, an ideology of equal opportunity is sustained, despite the fact that men generally do better in promotional terms. Gender differences in career achievement are accommodated by invocations of the effect that family responsibilities have on women's attitudes. Both men and women primary teachers accept the gender inequalities in promotion by claiming that older married women teachers are resigned to their dual family and work responsibilities and are unwilling to take on extra teaching duties because of family commitments (Spencer, 1986; Grant, 1989). Such a belief, that individualistic striving for promotion positions explains differential career achievements, is widely held in primary teaching as well as in other white collar occupations (Crompton and Jones, 1984).

#### **The compatibility between women teachers and young children**

The primary teaching labour market shares such sustaining ideological components as individualistic striving with other white collar occupations, but there are additional components in primary teaching that need to be elucidated. Perhaps of most significance is the idea that women are better than men at teaching very young children. The teaching of the very young, nursery and infant children, is almost exclusively female and there are promotion opportunities for women in infant education. Indeed some women move to infant education from other sectors specifically to achieve a headship post (Acker, 1987; Evetts, 1987; Grant, 1989). This aspect of the ideology that sustains the internal



teaching labour market reflects the general belief that women as mothers are the most appropriate carers and educators of young children. Women heads of infant schools can continue to see themselves as primarily mother-figures, as unambitious, as not competing against men, in such roles. Many women heads espouse such a view of themselves. They are ambivalent about their career successes, (Grant, 1987); their family accomplishments are as important to them.

However, other women are less accepting. Others will claim unfairness in the operation of the promotion system. Deliberate discrimination has certainly occurred in the past (Oram, 1989; Casey and Apple, 1989) when, for example, women were encouraged to apply and were selected for the headships of infant schools but were discouraged from competing for the more prestigious and higher paid junior and primary school headships. The equal opportunities legislation of the 1970s reduced such overt gender discrimination but clearly some appointing committees (and some women themselves) remain unconvinced, given the continued gender differences in this respect. The difficulties for women seeking promotion in teaching are beginning to be explored (Kant, 1985; Davidson, 1985; Burgess, 1988).

One consequence of the beliefs about women's suitability for teaching young children is that the typical career route to a primary headship is different for women and men. Women primary heads will more often have moved to primary headships following successful infant headships or after holding posts as heads of small village primary schools. This is likely to be the case whatever age group the woman has been trained to teach and has, in fact, been teaching. The route via an infant headship is not a career route that men will follow. Successful men will have proceeded directly to junior or primary headships from

deputy headships or classroom teaching.

The general belief in individualistic striving and the more specific belief in the gender appropriateness of certain teaching roles constitute the ideology that shapes the promotional opportunities within primary teaching. It is necessary also to specify the qualities and attributes that the internal labour market requires as qualifications for promotion into the upper sector, the headteacher position.

### Qualifications for Promotion

### Geographical mobility

Occupations vary in the extent to which promotion is indeed internal in geographical and/or job terms (Crompton and Jones, 1984). Primary teaching does seem to constitute a stratified internal labour market at the local education authority level. Of the women heads in the career history sample, the large majority had achieved their promotions in the county in which they were currently employed; indeed many of the heads had taught in only one administrative area of the county (Evetts, 1987). This suggests that the internal labour market of primary teaching for women is defined and specified according to local educational authority boundaries and may even be constricted further to operate within administrative areas or districts within those boundaries. The market for men primary teachers might be differently defined. It is possible that it will be similarly local, for the most part, although men primary teachers will be more likely to have the option of moving to a different local education authority in order to advance their career prospects, should this prove necessary.

In certain internal labour markets employees are required to be geographically mobile, usually to gain experience in various branches/establishments, in order to work their way up the promotion hierarchy. Crompton and Jones (1984) indicated that there would be important differences between internal labour markets according to whether employees have to operate with an 'occupational' career strategy (moving from employer to employer) or with an 'organizational' career strategy (where advancement can be sought within an employing organization). Brown (1982) has argued that for individuals pursuing occupational careers, qualifications and performance-related achievements are important while for those in organizational careers, emphasis is more on loyalty, reliability and commitment (see also Crompton and Sanderson, 1986). Clearly primary, junior and infant teaching is complex in this respect. Primary teachers need to develop an organizational career strategy in that promotion is sought within an employing educational authority. But educational administrators claim the desirability of experience in a range of schools. This aim might not necessarily be achieved in practice, however.

In general, married women primary teachers are not as mobile as men primary teachers. Few married women will be willing or able to move their families to develop their own careers. But for the women heads in the career history study, lack of geographical mobility did not seem to have been a handicap, especially in achieving an infant headship. Indeed, stability seemed to have been a characteristic that helped these women advance their careers. For most of the teachers who had been geographically mobile early on (in pursuit of their husbands' careers), their promotions did not begin until they were able to become established and to get themselves known in an area. For men primary teachers, family

constraints might be less prominent and men teachers might be more mobile, as a result. A comparative study of teacher career mobility has yet to be undertaken. But geographical mobility might be a significant gender difference in the career strategies of men and women primary teachers.

### Continuous service

Another usually important characteristic for promotion into the upper sector of internal labour markets is continuous, unbroken service. The ability to work continuously differentiates the working careers of men from those of most married women in many occupations, including primary teaching. The National Union of Teachers has estimated that approximately 65-70% of the female teaching population (both primary and secondary) eventually break their service (NUT, 1980; Grant, 1989). Some women (and some men) break their teaching service for reasons other than childcare, but it is this break that is by far the most significant for women. Out of the twenty-five primary and infant headteachers in the career history group, fifteen had broken their teaching service. Of the other ten, one had been a late entrant to teaching, eight had had no children and one had continued to teach without a break.

But the women heads in the career history study who had broken their teaching service were not out of teaching for long periods, nor did most experience these periods of time at home as real interruptions in their careers (see chapter five). The 'breaks' for this group ranged from eighteen months to eight years. But if part-time and supply teaching were calculated as the equivalent of half a year's service, then the large majority of this group was out of teaching for under three years. Most of these women had kept in touch with teaching either



through intermittent supply work or through more regular part-time teaching, or at the very least, through experience of setting up and assisting with play groups. One important consequence of this kind of incomplete break was that these women were not anxious about their abilities to do the teaching job on their return to teaching.

The internal labour market for primary teachers might be unusual compared with other white collar occupations, therefore, in that continuous service is not a prerequisite for promotion into the upper sector for women teachers. Clearly a break in service might explain some of the gender differences in the achievement of headteacher posts. But a break, particularly if it is short and incomplete, does not always stop women achieving promotion posts in primary and infant teaching. Certain features of the teaching labour market, such as the availability of part-time and of supply work, allow women to maintain contact with their teaching work while they are at home working as housewife/mothers. The ready availability of part-time and supply work for married women primary and infant teachers might distinguish the primary teaching labour market from other professional and semi-professional occupations. Moreover, in the primary teaching labour market a break in service and the manner of the subsequent return (for example, when women are sought out and their returns encouraged) might have positive career implications (see chapter five). Certainly for the women in the career history study, the break in service increased their self confidence. Their experiences at home had added to their understanding of the needs and capabilities of young children and had increased their confidence in their interactions with parents and with teaching colleagues. However, these positive implications of a break in service might be a unique feature of primary teaching as a job of work and the flexibility and choice in returning

options might be peculiar to the primary teaching labour market.

### Post entry qualifications

Crompton and Jones (1984) identified considerable variations among their three organizations in the extent to which post-entry qualifications were essential for promotion. In primary teaching, the precise significance of post-entry qualifications is difficult to specify categorically. For current headteacher post holders, both men and women, there seems to have been no necessity to acquire additional qualifications (Evetts, 1986). Similarly in the career history group, of the twenty-five women primary and infant heads, seven had gained an additional post-entry qualification (three had achieved an in-service BEd, one had an Open University BA degree and three had acquired advanced diplomas in education). But these post-entry qualifications were not undertaken with promotion in mind and most were achieved after the women had gained their headteacher positions. The heads claimed they were undertaken in order to up-date knowledge rather than to achieve career promotion. However, there was a feeling amongst some of the headteachers that since the teaching certificate had been down-graded by its replacement with the BEd degree for all new entrants, and with the current over-supply of candidates for promotion posts, post-entry qualifications were likely to become increasingly important in future in the promotions race.

For headteachers currently in post, length of experience and satisfactory teaching service (particularly if this had been noted by significant authority figures) had probably been sufficient for seeking promotion in the internal labour market. But there are signs that in the future post-entry qualifications might become an increasingly important

way of getting oneself known as wanting promotion and an increasingly necessary requirement for headteacher posts, for both men and women.

### Promotion Processes

So far the analysis has centred on some ideologies that support the internal teacher labour market and certain qualities which are thought to influence promotion prospects. Primary teaching shares certain of these characteristics with other white collar and professional occupations while other features are peculiar to the internal labour market for primary teachers. But it is necessary also to consider the processes whereby promotion posts are offered and taken up. In primary teaching there are two processes - sponsorship and the operation of an occupational community - which regulate access to promotion opportunities in the internal labour market of primary teaching. Other occupations share certain features of these processes (Marshall, 1984; Allen, 1988). In respect of primary teaching, these processes are interlinked and mutually supporting.

### Sponsorship

The belief in individualistic striving and meritocracy within the teaching profession, namely that promotion does not come automatically with age and length of service but rather that promotion has to be applied for and is the reward for merit, for ability and for taking on additional responsibilities, has already been discussed. What remains to be examined is how, in primary teaching, such promotional qualities are identified and how individuals are sponsored by 'gatekeepers' (Lyons,



1981). In internal labour markets, some individuals are recognized and encouraged to go for promotion whereas others are not so identified. Those not encouraged have to motivate themselves and even then may find it difficult to achieve a promotion post, or they continue as classroom teachers. The internal labour market model itself gives no indication of how promotable characteristics come to be identified and how the individuals who possess such characteristics are encouraged and backed in their attempts to secure promotion.

Headteachers are one such source of sponsorship. Giving encouragement to apply for promotion is clearly different from having the power actually to allocate promotion posts. But heads can and do apply for scale promotions (now incentive allowances) for individual teachers, although the advertising, application and selection procedures for deputy head and headteacher positions are rather more formalised. Inspectors and advisers also practice sponsorship. Winkley (1985) has suggested that inspector/advisers have more influence over career prospects in primary than in secondary schools. Clearly there are also cases where heads and inspectors work closely together to determine appointments and promotions (Dockrell et al., 1986). Generally speaking, then, in the teacher labour market within local education authorities, there are important links between heads, inspectors/advisers and teachers and these links seem particularly important for promotion prospects in primary education.

It is necessary also to consider whether there are differences between men and women primary teachers in the process by which they become career ambitious. In chapter seven the part played by 'gatekeepers' in motivating women to seek promotion is discussed. The women heads in the career history study frequently mentioned the influence of



inspectors/advisers and of their own headteachers in giving the initial push and guiding the teachers into appropriate courses of action.

Although not all of the women heads attributed their career success to the initial encouragement of such 'gatekeepers'; some were clearly self-motivated; nevertheless such sponsorship was an important motivating factor in early career decisions.

It is probable, therefore, that teachers who wait to be sponsored for such internal promotions such as incentive allowances are likely to take longer to achieve initial career promotions than those who motivate and push themselves. And it is possible that there are important gender differences in the numbers of teachers who are willing to push themselves. This, together with any differential support given to women and men by 'gatekeepers', means that gender differences in the origins of career ambition could have important consequences for the numbers of men and women in headteacher posts.

### Occupational communities

A related factor that is probably important in the process of promotion for the woman primary teacher is membership of an occupational community or teacher network. Amongst the women in the career history group, there was a very real sense of community that had existed when as teacher-mothers they had shared difficulties, experiences and solutions with other women teachers and with their own headteachers. This sense of community continued when, as headteachers themselves, they tried to assist their own women staff to work out compromises in their teaching and in their family responsibilities (see chapter six). The concept of 'occupational community' has been used in the past to refer to instances where various characteristics of the man's work have resulted in the

formation of a community of families who live close together in a relatively isolated residential location and who share a common life style, common values and so on. The necessity of a common residential location as a characteristic of an occupational community was challenged by Salaman (1974). It is probable that communities which develop in connection with female occupations will have rather different sorts of characteristics. Women who are primary teachers, for example, do not live in the same geographical areas; if married their husbands have different kinds of occupation and, to that extent, their life styles vary. However, often there is a strong sense of shared identity and considerable fellow-feeling amongst women facing conflicting demands on their time and energy. Where women have similar sets of (family and teaching) obligations; where there is broad agreement concerning the expectations they set themselves; where women experience common problems and difficulties; frequently they will pull together to fulfill the tasks and to share solutions that have worked. Out of necessity, women teachers in primary education will work, cooperate and support each other in diverse ways.

The implications of this female teaching community for promotional opportunities in the internal labour market are many. Where married women, as heads, have achieved a measure of control over the scale promotions (incentive allowances) of their staff and their resources in schools, then manoeuvrability, cooperation, assistance and mutual support can be maximised. In such a situation, there are more opportunities for heads to take decisions and make arrangements with women teachers' career and family obligations, with women's career strategies in mind. The consequences for men primary teachers are perhaps rather different. But men teachers have for a long time benefitted from the operation of

gender-specific promotional networks.

Following the identification of these two processes in the internal labour market of primary teaching, it is possible to indicate further promotion-related qualities. These qualities became apparent from the career history research data and are additional to those Crompton and Jones have described for other white collar workers. These additional characteristics arise out of and are related to the processes of sponsorship and the operation of an occupational community in primary teaching. They are also explained by the existence of close ties between management and classroom practitioners in primary teaching whereby it is possible for heads and inspectors/advisers to sponsor and encourage certain teachers in the competition for promotion. These additional characteristics seem to work in a number of different ways. But in order to trigger the sponsorship and community networks, it is necessary for individuals to display the following sorts of attributes: an ability to get oneself known in the local educational area through special teaching achievements and/or through attendance and prominence at in-service courses; a willingness to take on extra responsibilities in school and to show leadership qualities particularly in times of crisis; an educational philosophy and pedagogical practices that accord with the headteacher's and are currently in favour at the local authority inspector/adviser level; a familiarity with innovative schemes. In addition, it is important to emphasize tenacity and a willingness to put oneself forward for promotion and to continue to apply for promotion posts even following rejections.

In the past, both the general attributes and processes and those specific to the primary teaching labour market have seemed to favour men teachers for promotion posts although women have always succeeded in



achieving the headships of separate infant schools. Thus gender has been a significant factor in the internal labour market of primary teaching. However, if more women achieve the headships of junior and primary schools, in addition to the headships of infant schools, then there will be more opportunity for the teacher-community and sponsorship processes of primary education to work in women's favour.

### THE LABOUR MARKET UNDER DIFFERENT CONDITIONS

The attributes and qualities necessary for promotion in primary teaching and the ideologies and processes that operate in the internal labour market to control promotional opportunities provide information at the middle-range of analysis. Such information can help to bridge the gap that exists between interactionist concerns with individual strategies and the structuralist emphasis on macro contexts. In conclusion, it is important to ask how are the attributes and qualities for promotion and particularly the processes of the internal labour market modified under different external conditions of expansion or contraction?

The attributes and qualities identified as significant for promotion success will be applied differently in times of teacher shortage and in times of plentiful supply of teachers. Where there is a teacher shortage, then qualifications such as geographical stability, continuous service and post-entry qualifications can be relaxed (as in the 1950's and 1960's) and teachers who do not meet such criteria might nevertheless be promoted. But when there is a contraction of the education service, a ready supply of teachers and numerous candidates for promotion posts (as in the 1980's), then these characteristics can form the basis for



selection. And such qualifications would receive the endorsement of most teachers as valid universalistic criteria for promotion success.

The teaching community and sponsorship processes of primary education will also serve different purposes in times of teacher shortage and teacher abundance. When there is a shortage of teachers, the occupational community can work to bring women teachers back into teaching and to assist them in devising and negotiating family and teaching strategies; the sponsorship mechanisms can operate to encourage both men and women teachers to apply for promotion and to succeed. On the other hand, when there is a plentiful supply of teachers and of applicants for promotion posts then there will be fewer opportunities for the community of women teachers to support individual members in their attempts to resolve pressing family and teaching dilemmas. But the sponsorship processes will continue to operate. In the tighter economic and educational climate of the 1980's, when there were fewer promotion posts and less movement generally within the teaching profession, then it is probable that only those with continuous (or almost continuous) teaching service, with post-entry qualifications and with strong local links and connections were sponsored for promotion.

The concept of an internal labour market, together with an understanding of the occupational culture of teaching, can assist our understanding, therefore, of how external structural conditions are mediated in occupations and come to influence the lives and careers of individual teachers. By examining the occupational characteristics and the processes whereby certain individuals or categories of individuals are identified, encouraged or even sponsored for promotion, it is possible to assess in what ways professions and occupations share or vary in their work conditions and in the operation of their internal labour markets.

In addition, it is also possible to identify and describe how different external conditions of expansion or contraction are worked out in particular occupational groups. Contexts for career and for promotion operate on a number of different levels. But such contexts are outside the control of any particular individual, whatever their attitude to career. The strategies of women primary teachers in negotiating these different contexts are the focus of the next chapter.

Analysis of subjective careers can assist our understanding of how individuals have perceived of and have managed career contexts, the external conditions of expansion or contraction, the promotion structure, and the constraints and opportunities of particular labour markets. In order to develop the notion of career as an explanatory concept, it is necessary to understand how individuals have constructed and developed their careers, and what 'having a career' means to the individuals involved. The notion of 'strategy' is important in this respect. A strategy is a means whereby something is achieved. It is a way of managing competing claims. It is the way goals and perceived objectives are negotiated and balanced. For women teachers in primary education, the study of their subjective careers will include an analysis of their different strategies for coping with their careers. In addition, the subjective career will include the management of competing claims of family and paid work, of private and public dimensions. If that is how the participants themselves perceived of the meaning and importance of their work.

Careers in primary teaching for both men and women, as in all occupations, are developed at the same time as other aims and goals in the personal sphere. Although personal goals vary a great deal (not all men

## Chapter 4

### WOMEN'S CAREER STRATEGIES

The concept of 'subjective career' is concerned with how individuals have actually experienced their working lives and the meanings they attach to their work and to their careers. But the study of subjective careers must also establish a link with career contexts. Analysis of subjective careers can assist our understanding of how individuals have perceived of and have managed career contexts, the external conditions of expansion or contraction, the promotion structure, and the constraints and opportunities of particular labour markets.

In order to develop the notion of career as an explanatory concept, it is necessary to understand how individuals have constructed and developed their careers, and what 'having a career' means to the individuals involved. The notion of 'strategy' is important in this respect. A strategy is a means whereby something is achieved. It is a way of managing competing claims. It is the way goals and perceived objectives are negotiated and balanced. For women teachers in primary education, the study of their subjective careers will include an analysis of their different strategies for coping with their careers. In addition, the subjective career will include the management of competing claims of family and paid work, of private and public dimensions, if that is how the participants themselves perceived of the meaning and importance of their work.

Careers in primary teaching for both men and women, as in all occupations, are developed at the same time as other aims and goals in the personal sphere. Although personal goals vary a great deal (not all men

and women wish to marry and have children), nevertheless, most commonly personal goals will include marriage and perhaps also parenthood. However for women, in contrast to many men, the achievement of such personal goals is likely to have a more dramatic impact on the working career. Women's commitment to their work, their attitudes to ambition, their desire for promotion, in teaching or any occupation, is likely to be affected by marriage and particularly by parenthood. It is usually parenthood rather than marriage that is more significant in generating home-work conflicts (Larwood and Wood, 1977; Gutek et al., 1981). This is because the responsibility for the maintenance of the marital home and, particularly, the physical care and emotional well-being of young children, is seen to lie with the woman. So, whereas men can and do talk about their careers as something totally separate and distinct from their personal and family lives, for women career goals and personal ambitions are more intimately connected, intertwined and interrelated. For women, the study of their subjective careers has to include the strategies women devise for coping with their personal as well as their work responsibilities.

For women who want to marry and also, perhaps, to have their own children, their careers will take a different form to the careers of their male colleagues and their subjective careers may well show different meanings and interpretations of the term 'career'. Typologies of women's careers have to include the ways in which women reconcile and compromise their aims in the personal sphere, perhaps to have and to care for their own families, with their desires to develop their working careers. Silverstone (Silverstone and Ward, 1980, pp. 30 and 31) summarized the typologies that have been developed so far which have explored the different ways in which women in the professions have combined their family and their career goals. It is interesting, as Silverstone notes,



that in one of the early classifications (Super, 1957) the 'conventional' career pattern was described as one where the woman ended work on marriage or childbirth. Clearly this described the most common strategy in the 1950s possibly because of the continuing effects of the marriage bar (whereby women were required to give up their paid work when they married) in many occupations above the manual level.

The most common career strategy for married women in the professions, semi-professions and other white collar employment in the 1980s has been termed the 'interrupted' pattern where the woman stops work while her children are young and returns to her work or her career later. The Rapoports (1971) believed that the interrupted model was the most socially approved pattern. Silverstone and Ward (1980) claimed that the professional woman's life pattern was now typically: school - training - work - withdrawal - return - retirement; in contrast with that of professional men which was: school - training - work - retirement. Some recent studies (Marshall, 1984; Scase and Goffee, 1989) have suggested that in certain high status and competitive occupations, for the minority of women in such occupations, their work patterns were identical with those of the men. However, such a career pattern might be confined to single and/or childfree women with fewer wider family responsibilities. Certainly women's career experiences vary according to different work cultures and labour market conditions as well as with the women's family situations.

This chapter is concerned with women primary teachers' strategies, with ways of going about things, with ways of achieving goals. In the particular external conditions of expansion or contraction and negotiating the facilities and limitations of the primary teaching labour market, how do women teachers in primary education manage their careers and their

personal aims? What strategies are developed to enable women to work at their teaching careers and, at the same time, meet the expectations they set themselves for their personal lives, usually to marry and frequently also to have their own children? The concept of 'strategy' in sociological and educational research has been explained in chapter one. It is important to emphasize that by examining the strategies whereby individuals achieve certain goals, personal as well as work goals, the emphasis can be on career as a process and a continually developing process as goals are being created and re-defined and as specific constraints come and go. But strategies are not to be understood necessarily as the achievement of clearly defined and early conceived life plans. Some individuals may see their subjective careers in such a way and construct strategies accordingly. But for many others, certainly of women, decisions are made, goals emerge and strategies are developed more commonly through negotiation, luck and chance, procrastination and serendipity.

It has been argued that the promotion structure of an occupation is a vital component of individuals strategies. Teaching is an occupation with a more or less standardized and regularized promotion structure. For both men and women in teaching, promotion has to be achieved within a nationally agreed and defined career hierarchy. Recent changes to the teaching career and salary structure with the implementation of a common salary scale and incentive allowances has replaced the more complex Burnham system of scaled posts and positions which was operational until 1987. The Teachers Pay and Conditions Document of that year also removed the need for uniformity between local education authorities and there is now some variation from one local authority to another, for example in the distribution of incentive allowances between schools of different sizes.

This has to an extent reduced the standardization of the teachers promotion structure across the country. Such changes in the career and promotion structure will have to be accommodated in the career strategies of men and women primary teachers.

But in an occupation like teaching, where there is a standardized, hierarchical career and salary structure, all teachers have an incremental position on the salary scale. This means that women teachers cannot avoid the promotion ladder. Women in other professions and occupations can work as single practitioners, in partnerships or in small units. But women teachers have a position on a nationally agreed and recognized salary scale and position on this scale is regarded as being synonymous with career progress. Thus women teachers have to have an attitude to promotion in their careers. Women's differential attitudes to promotion are an important part of their subjective career strategies.

In the descriptions of the main types of subjective career which follow, the strategies are differentiated according to a combination of factors. But the most important determinant is the interrelationship of personal and public goals, of how women manage these two sets of responsibilities and of how their success with their strategies affects their attitudes to their working careers at different times in their lives. The five types are:

1. The Accommodated Career
2. The Antecedent Career
3. The Two-Stage Career
4. The Subsequent Career
5. The Compensatory Career



The types are differentiated according to the woman's priorities in respect of career and personal goals particularly early in the career but also whether the priorities remain constant over the woman's life cycle or whether her priorities change at different times or stages in her life. Another differentiating factor is the woman's attitude to promotion, whether or not promotion is sought after. If promotion is desired then the stage and the manner in which the woman seeks promotion will further differentiate the career types. An additional factor, related to the previous, is the woman's self-image; what the woman regards as her primary source of identity and satisfaction early in her life and again whether her primary source of identity changes over the course of her life cycle or whether it remains constant throughout. A final factor differentiating the strategies and developing out of the previous differences is the woman's main source of motivation. What does the woman enjoy most about her teaching work and how important is the achievement of promotion to her satisfaction with her work?

The five career types involve alternative strategies but, because the emphasis is on career as a process, the model can include change. Having embarked on one type of strategy, nevertheless over the course of her life, the woman might change from one career type to another as personal circumstances alter and as educational conditions and labour market arrangements are modified. Strategies two to five will be illustrated using data from the headteachers in the career history study since these strategies all involve the successful achievement of promotion. The first strategy involves a different kind of attitude to promotion in the career.



## THE ACCOMMODATED CAREER

There are many different ways and many different reasons for accommodation in the working career. For secondary teachers, Bennet (1985) has examined the attitudes of Art Teachers towards their careers. The art teachers interviewed by her were not particularly concerned to advance their careers in the conventional way, by achieving promotion. Instead, they wanted "to fashion a satisfactory life style and to secure conditions which meet their in-school and out-of-school needs" (p.127). Similarly for primary teachers, it is likely that many teachers are content to have a job of work which enables them to have a life style in which they can develop other aspects of themselves.

Most obviously the accommodated career is the strategy of those who have not been promoted and are not actively seeking such promotion. Accommodated careers are developed in two main ways. The first is where promotion is consciously rejected and the second is where promotion has been sought but the search has been largely unsuccessful. Thus the motivations for and the satisfaction with the accommodated career will be different in these two cases.

For women who constantly reject promotion their motives will be various, but for the majority, particularly of those who are married, some form of family commitment of all kinds will be most important. Family obligations are not confined to the married, however. Obligations to parents can constitute important family commitments regardless of whether the woman is married. Clearly no teacher would refuse a salary increase but there are women teachers who might reject promotion if it involved changing the nature of the teaching work they enjoy (classroom contact with children, for example) or if it involved increasing their

responsibilities and hours of work such that some aspect of their out-of-school lives were affected. Women who develop accommodated careers probably regard their family responsibilities or other personal out-of-school commitments as their main priority. Their teaching work will be fitted around their other commitments. They will take time out of teaching when their children are young and they will return to do part-time or supply work until their families can cope with a full-time commitment. Alternatively, they might never return or they might continue with part-time or supply work for the rest of their careers. Their salaries will be second incomes, providing extras and giving the woman a sense of financial independence. It was suggested by Hilsum and Start (1974) that such women were a vital resource in teaching since they are unambitious for promotion and not in the competition for the limited number of promotions posts.

Mostly these women enjoy and most take pride in their classroom teaching (Nias, 1986). They will adjust to national curriculum and testing demands if they have to, but they would rather be left to themselves to do the job they know in ways that they have discovered will work (Freedman, 1985). Teacher appraisal might leave them anxious since they fear their classroom commitments will be de-valued in favour of the school-wide curriculum responsibilities being encouraged in the new collegiate arrangements for schools. They are not ambitious for promotion but they would like recognition for a job well done.

Accommodated careers will have involved balancing personal and teaching responsibilities over the course of the working life. Classroom teaching will be that aspect of their work that they most enjoy. Such women teachers forfeit or do not develop their promotion ambition; they do not seek or they might consciously reject promotion. For many of these

women their self-image is primarily as wives, mothers and carers and their identity fits conventional norms of socially acceptable behaviour. Their role conflict is minimised. These women have put their personal responsibilities to husbands, children and parents, first.

At some stage, and usually later in their working careers, some of these women might change their minds. They might seek promotion since their teaching experience is long and varied and, with their family commitments reduced, they begin to feel they would like more influence on what goes on in schools. Those who are successful in achieving promotion will now be developing subsequent careers (see later) where their promotion has been deferred. But for those who are unsuccessful in achieving promotion, their careers will remain accommodated but their motivations and satisfactions in their teaching work might change. In these instances accommodation will have arisen for different reasons, namely, that the woman has been unable to attain promotion; attempts at career development and progress have been thwarted. Many women teachers in this position are nevertheless reconciled. They continue to enjoy their teaching work and take pride in their classrooms and their family accomplishments. Their strategies, motivations and satisfactions continue much as before. Others, however, might feel a certain bitterness about their careers and the lack of success with their promotion attempts. This can be expressed by blaming the unfairness of the promotions system or perhaps by blaming their own work and family strategies. Such attitudes can cause difficulties in staffrooms and tensions among working colleagues. If such women no longer feel entirely satisfied with classroom teaching as a job of work then such resentments can affect both work and personal life. Wherever accommodation in the career occurs because ambitions have been thwarted, then women will need in some way to

become reconciled to their lack of promotion achievements. Such reconciliation can come in different ways. Acceptance and continued enjoyment of teaching work, balanced against pride in family and other out-of-school events and experiences, is perhaps the most common strategy for such women teachers.

#### THE ANTECEDENT CAREER : PROMOTION PRECEDED

**Mrs. Williams** (Age 37; divorced and living with another partner. No children. First headship at age 31. Currently head of infants school.)

I was qualified in 1969 and in my first year I worked in London. At the end of that year we got married and went to America. I couldn't get a teaching post there and things went wrong with my husband's course, so by Christmas we came back to England. We went to live with his parents and I got a job teaching at the local school. I taught there from January to July, whereupon we moved to Pennington. I went to a primary school where I taught infants. I was there three years. After one year I got a scale two, then I got a scale three. Then I got a deputy headship at a school in the city. I was there for five years. Then I came here as head six years ago.

JE: Had you tried for any other headships before you got



this one?

Mrs. Williams: No. This was the first one and I got it. I will eventually look for a larger school, a primary school, I expect. There was one recently that tempted me which I didn't pursue because this term wasn't the right term. I had other things on my mind. And it was a larger school with extra responsibilities and exactly the same salary. So I decided not to.

JE: Was it your choice not to have children?

Mrs. Williams: It was through career really. I didn't have time for children. And through things going wrong early on. (Divorced after four years marriage). I mean everything sort of went disastrously wrong. But I got too involved in my career to think of having time off for children ... I've never wanted children. I just don't think I could cope with career and children personally speaking.

A lot of people I talk to who have what they call a job of work, go in and they do the job and come out again and that's the end of the matter. They say to me we don't understand why you've always got stacks of work or why you're still thinking about it and talking about it or going on weekend courses. I feel its a career and its a profession because it isn't a nine to five job. There's

a lot more to it and I suppose you could make it what it is. But to me that's what a career is. And also its been structured. I've gone up through it through stages, with varying degrees of responsibility and I feel a career involves responsibility, being responsible for other people. I suppose that's how I view a career ... I am ambitious. I have been successful and I'm proud of it. I do think that having children limits a woman's potential for a career. The women I know, all of the ones who have perhaps got stuck at a certain level. It's maybe because they've left, had children, come back to work and are still having the main responsibility for children because the husband may be doing exactly the same job but isn't taking the same responsibility for the children. I do feel perhaps I give too much time and thought to work and perhaps I ignore aspects of my personal life which perhaps I should be giving time to. I'm very selfish about giving time to my personal life. I tend to give a lot of it to work and leave very little over for home .... I have to make myself turn off and I find it very difficult to turn off and say right now is time just to do some cooking or whatever. Often you know we might not eat a meal for days because I'm coming home and getting on with work or I'm tired out and (my partner) will be too. I don't do much apart from work. I've been on committees to do with work but nothing apart from that.

The first type of career involving promotion is 'the antecedent career'. Here, as the name implies, the woman is highly committed to her working career right from the beginning. The teaching career is the priority in the early years of teaching and subsequently there will be only minor modifications to this order of priorities if there are any changes at all. The work-career objective is pursued and developed first and, to this end, goals in the personal sphere are worked for only to the extent that they do not interfere with the career. Personal goals are fitted in with and around career goals rather than the other way. Thus some women primary teachers might remain single for career reasons, that is in order that they might achieve promotion earlier in their working lives. If relationships or circumstances in the personal sphere are secondary to or are fitted around work goals, then the career strategy is antecedent. However, if the woman is single for reasons other than career, then this might constitute a different strategy. In other cases, the woman may marry, assuming she can continue to develop her career, but parenthood is rejected as incompatible with career progress.

Alternatively, parenthood might be postponed and then subsequently rejected or the parenthood goal might be modified (one child rather than two or more) and the woman would return to teaching out of choice as soon as possible.

Women whose career strategies come into the antecedent category are career ambitious from the beginning. They acknowledge their ambition and are proud of their successes. Most would claim that they had pushed themselves and worked hard to achieve promotion and to develop their teaching careers. But one variation is where a woman might claim she was

made career ambitious by significant others, so-called 'gate-keepers' (Lyons, 1981), within the teaching profession (heads, advisers, inspectors). However, whether or not the motivation for promotion was self-generated, such women achieve their headships young, usually before the age of 35 and many will have ambitions to go beyond the headteacher position, for example, into the inspectorate or college lecturing posts.

Women who pursue an antecedent career strategy are very positive about their teaching work and its central importance to them and to their lives. For such women, their self-image and identity derive primarily from their occupational role. They are headteachers first and foremost and their work is their greatest source of satisfaction and achievement. In addition, it is interesting to note that an antecedent career strategy might affect other aspects of non-working lives. The reference groups of such women, for example, are likely to be made up of fellow headteachers, advisers and inspectors. Their friends and associates will be teaching colleagues and other headteachers, for the most part. They will draw no clear line between work and leisure since work will spill over into so-called personal time and teaching might be discussed in social and family situations.

If an antecedent career strategy is adopted then this might continue as the dominant pattern throughout the woman's working life. But some women who begin with an antecedent career strategy might not continue with such a strategy. As a result of changes, particularly in personal circumstances, which might affect a change in the order of priorities, women might modify their career strategy to one of the other main types.



THE TWO-STAGE CAREER: PROMOTION NEGOTIATED

Mrs. Gilbert (Head of Primary School. Age 42; married with  
no children though still trying to have a baby.  
First headship age 34.)

I have had a good career. Admittedly I have had to fit in with my husbands moves, but I feel I have used them all to my advantage. When I was teaching in Wales, it was not as poor an area as here but it was my first taste. You see in Gottonshire when I was at college I had had no taste of edge-of-city school children with learning problems. When I taught in Thetshire I worked with slow learning children and that got my interest. Then in a village situation, it was a variety, a different approach, being in the heart of the community. Then when I moved to Penns County, a go-ahead authority, I valued the extra provision. I felt I used the situation of having to move to my advantage because I have worked in such a variety of schools with a lot of different types of children from different backgrounds and thats all been a wealth of experience to draw upon later. Once I was in Pennington, my husband was settled and I was able to build on what had happened and to build a career for myself.

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JE: Was it a positive decision to have no children?

Mrs. Gilbert: It was in the early years. I wanted to be a headteacher. Well, I don't say I always wanted to be. It wasn't an ambition from the outset. I felt I could be a deputy and then once I was a deputy, I thought I had the ability to be a headteacher. So my original idea was that I would put it off until I was a deputy and then I would give up once I had shown I could be a deputy and then perhaps I would have a family. But then once I was a deputy I thought well I would like to be a head now and then I thought well when I was a head and I had my own school perhaps then I would have a family.

But, of course, things don't always work out as you'd hoped, do they? You get rather on the older side, which was what happened to me. We are still trying for a family actually ... I had a miscarriage in April. I had a miscarriage three years ago. I have been pregnant again since April and lost it in the early weeks ... I think there will be some regrets if we find we can't. That is if I go on like this.

But it was a positive decision to put off having a family until my career was established, and my husband's too.

The future depends on whether I'm able to carry a baby in the near future. If we do have a child, I do not know whether to give up my job or not. I won't think it

through finally because then I will have set my sights on that and so you begin to anticipate moving out of this situation. So I would want to know first that I had had the baby and that everything was OK. If there was no baby, then I would probably start to look around for another headship.

The next major type of strategy involving promotion is 'the two-stage career'. In this case, the woman begins her working life highly committed to career, marriage and parenthood. She wants all equally and although she is willing to delay one in order to achieve another, she is not willing to give up any. All are important for her self-image and personal identity at the start of her career and continue to be of great significance at all stages in her life cycle. At different times in her life, one goal will have temporary precedence but there is constant negotiation, compromise and consolidation between work and personal goals.

In order to cope with both work and family goals, the woman aims to construct her teaching career in two stages. She climbs the lower scales and gains experience before devoting herself to family goals. Most commonly she will postpone parenthood in order to develop her career up to a certain position. Then, having achieved the career goal she has set herself, either she keeps her own career ticking over for a period (while her husband develops his career or while her own children are very young) or she takes time out of teaching while personal and family responsibilities loom large in her order of priorities.

Then, subsequently, in the second stage, she returns to teaching and she renews her commitment to career and possibly takes steps to

develop it further. During this period, ideally her husband is settled in his work; if she has children her childcare arrangements will have been negotiated and will be working adequately or even successfully and her children will be becoming increasingly independent. Sometimes responsibilities for the older generation (parents and parents-in-law) intervene and further arrangements have to be negotiated with husbands and siblings. But, in many cases by means of paid assistance with housework and increased financial resources which permit the purchase of, say, a second car, the woman can focus her attention again on her teaching work and on developing her career.

However within primary teaching, such a two-stage career strategy does have certain limitations. It seems that if the woman primary teacher achieves only a modest degree of scale promotion before taking a career break then, after her return, she is likely to have to return to a low position on the salary scale and climb the promotion ladder for a second time. This is the case whether the woman returns to full-time teaching directly or returns via part-time and supply teaching. In general, educational authorities have accepted that women teachers return to scale one posts (now basic scale posts) rather than taking up posts at the scale position they were at before taking time out of their careers to care for their families (although their incremental positions on the basic scale have been adjusted according to length of experience and qualifications). If this was the case whatever the post the woman had achieved, then the potentiality of a two-stage career strategy within primary teaching would be drastically limited, unless the woman chose to remain in teaching for the whole of her working life.

It is interesting to speculate, however, to what extent a headteacher post constitutes a 'threshold position' for women



contemplating a break in teaching service. Could a woman who was a headteacher before taking a career break, realistically expect to compete for a headteacher post on her return to teaching ? None of the headteachers in the career history group had yet successfully pursued such a two-stage career strategy although four of the heads without children were still young enough to break their service in order to have children of their own and two (see Mrs. Gilbert) were planning so to do. This might be a newly emerging career strategy, therefore, for women in primary teaching.

So, the details of the two-stage career for primary teachers still have to be worked out and tested. It is a promising strategy for women who want both family and career. Also, it is probable that the notion of a 'two-stage career' and a 'threshold position' within a profession or occupation, one which once achieved, could be regained on the return after a break in service, could be applied to women's careers more generally. Research would need to be done on other occupations and professions but it seems the notions would be particularly appropriate wherever an occupation contained a nationally recognized and negotiated, hierarchically organized career structure.

I don't think I would have applied for promotion if it

hadn't been in the school and that it just fell away

#### THE SUBSEQUENT CAREER : PROMOTION DEFERRED

Mrs. Pointer (Teaching-head of small rural primary school. Age 48;

married to teacher in Special Education; two children.

Mrs. Pointer First headship age 44; currently in same post)

had to stay at that school for about 10 years

(When teaching at the school her children were attending)

I was so pleased that I'd got a job that enabled me to go to school and not neglect my children because they were coming home with me each night. Promotion never entered my head at all and it was only because that scale post cropped up in that school. You see, now scale posts would have to be advertised all the time. But then the head decided that if I carried on as I was, as a class teacher, that he was going to give me the scale post. He announced it at a staff meeting. He talked to me about it first and said did I feel that even if it meant doing extra work at home and I said that as long as you're satisfied that a lot of the extra work would be done at home while my children are still at primary school. When it was the odd course after school I was always able to arrange with a friend that they went to play. It wasn't very often and he discussed it with me and said he would like me to do it. So he just announced it at the staff meeting that I was offered it. Well, I mean they couldn't do that now. But that was the system you see. I don't think I would have applied for promotion if it hadn't been in the school and that it just fell in my path really.

JE: What about the deputy headship ?

Mrs. Pointer: I began to feel a little bit that either I had to stay at that school for always, or that was the time to start looking for a move. When I looked through

the advertisements - I didn't do it every Monday thinking I must grab that because I must get out, because I was really happy there you know. I just casually looked at things that I thought it would be worth me applying for. Then one day this was advertised. It was a small village school; it was still within travelling distance from my home and by this time my daughter had now gone to secondary school and so they were going to be coming home later. And the post was for middle juniors; it was for games which has been one of my specialist subjects and country dancing and it was to help them to develop language curriculum and that's what I'd had my post for. It was just as if it was heaven-sent and I looked at it and thought well if I look for all the years that I've got left in my life I will never find anything that fits so much what I'm already doing and that I could extend and so I just put in an application and it happened.

JE: Had you applied for other deputy headships ?

Mrs. Pointer: No. That was the first one; the only one and I got it. Then, when the head retired, I applied for the headship because it didn't seem sensible not to have a go. The head encouraged me to apply. He said you have watched me work and you could do this work and also, as you will know, as a deputy you support the head to such an extent that things like outings, games, all this kind of thing I had organized and so the parents got to know

me very well. He said that several parents had said that they hoped that it works that Mrs. Pointer can get promotion. The authority were not one hundred per cent happy because it really isn't policy. But you see we're an aided school and the governors have quite a say and although the authority were involved in the interview I don't know whether the authority voted for me or not but they were obviously not strongly enough against it at the interview because the governors decided along with an educationalist and the diocese education chief after the interview that they would offer it to me. There were five of us interviewed, so it was just lucky.

JE: And, again, it was the only headship you had applied for, there were no others?

Mrs. Pointer: No.

A further strategy involving promotion is 'the subsequent career'. In this strategy the woman has no clear promotion ambitions early in her working life; her family goals are her main priority. Most women who adopt a subsequent career strategy see teaching early in their careers as an occupation to which they can devote themselves usually until they become mothers. Then they intend to withdraw from teaching to become full-time mothers and they only vaguely anticipate their return to teaching at some stage in the future. Becoming a wife no longer requires the abandonment of a teaching career but becoming a mother is often



regarded as sufficient reason for taking a break from teaching duties in order to become wholly occupied for short or longer periods with child-rearing. This strategy also covers those women who are late entrants into teaching, those who train and enter teaching after the completion of family goals. Such a broken or late-entry career is regarded as the most socially acceptable type. For the women heads in the career history study whose career strategies came into this category, their career ambitions did not begin to form until after they had completed their family goals: until after their husbands were established at work and were geographically stable; until after they had had their children and the children were settled at school; until they had returned or entered late into full-time teaching and, in their own estimation, they were coping well with all of their responsibilities, to family and to work. Only then, and usually with the example of a colleague who had done it before them, did the women developing this strategy begin to contemplate going for promotion. And if anything in the family sphere had begun to go wrong in their view, either in their relationships with their husbands or in their fulfilment of the responsibilities they saw themselves to have towards their children, then it would have been promotion in the teaching career that would have been postponed or even abandoned.

Women who develop subsequent career strategies will achieve their headship posts when they are older since this group do not begin to climb the promotion ladder until they are in their late thirties or early forties and their family responsibilities are becoming lighter. In addition, for them the headteacher post will be their final career achievement; they will have little desire or motivation to go further.

For these women, their families, their relationships with their

husbands, children (and parents and in-laws) are of fundamental importance to their sense of self. The woman heads who develop subsequent careers show a marked reluctance to apply the term 'ambitious' to themselves. They prefer to be seen as women who have coped successfully with home, family and teaching career. Earlier in their careers, their homes and families have been their main priority. Later in their careers, as their family responsibilities are reduced, their teaching work and their own careers have increased in significance. Sometimes these women will play down their career achievements, perhaps to preserve family harmony. But rather than seeing themselves as ambitious or strongly motivated to achieve, they emphasize the importance of chance or luck factors in their careers: they have been in the right place at the right time; their husbands have been very supportive and their children have been healthy and very adaptable. So, these women have been 'lucky' in achieving their headteacher posts. A headship position was not their main priority. It was a welcome pat-on-the-back, but they don't put much emphasis or importance on it. In general, these women will maintain a distinction

between For women who defer promotion achievements, their identity as women, as wives and as mothers, is as important to them as their career identity as primary headteachers. Early in their working lives, their personal goals are more important. Later in their careers all of their roles, both work and family, give them equal sources of satisfaction although the personal goals remain supreme. When they achieve their headteacher positions, they see their family and teaching roles as being mutually supportive and both are important for their self-image. Their success as wives and as mothers continues to give these heads a great deal of satisfaction. These women are likely to experience role conflict initially when they return to or, as late entrants, begin their careers,

since they are unlikely always to be able to fulfil childcare responsibilities as they might wish (see chapter six) or if they are anxious about their coping strategies. But later in their careers, these dilemmas become less acute and their identities as wives, mothers and as headteachers become complementary.

It seems also that a subsequent career strategy will have less impact on the social and personal sphere in that these women are likely to retain and also to develop reference groups which extend beyond the world of teaching and might include community, church, voluntary or political groups. To an extent these women will compartmentalize their teaching work and develop family and leisure pursuits that might include and involve the husbands' friends, colleagues and associates as well as their own. These women want to retain a portion of themselves for their husbands and for their children and they will maintain friendships and activities that have nothing to do with teaching. If the woman's husband is also a teacher (and this is not unusual) then this becomes more difficult. But, in general, these women will maintain a distinction between their work and their social and personal lives. Also, although their work increases in significance as their family responsibilities to an extent decline, nevertheless success in their personal lives remains of supreme importance. Career success cannot compensate for perceived failure in the personal sphere. Indeed, if personal goals are not successfully maintained then the career strategy itself will be different in that the woman's motivation to develop her career will have shifted and changed.

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sort of thing helped to keep my sanity because I had a  
very set routine so that everything I had to do got done  
and nothing was left undone. It didn't give me time for

THE COMPENSATORY CAREER: PROMOTION SUBSTITUTED

Mrs Porter (Head of Primary School. Age 48; once divorced, Part of being once separated, living with third partner. Two children from first marriage. First headship age 35.)

I have such guilt feelings about my kids. Everybody says don't be so stupid. But they will never go. I would love to start again with my children from birth and do it again. I would, honestly. They had a tough time. I was often so tired that I was only keeping up with things, doing things all the time. In the evenings, I would come home, do whatever housework there was to be done, get a meal, then I would sit down and I'd fall asleep and they wouldn't even be able to wake me. I would suddenly come to and find two children on me waking me up and instead of giving them the time, I'd slept. So the children missed out. I know they did.

They've said I was over-organized and I left no loop-holes for them to express themselves. The rules I had at home, which I had for my own survival, to enable me to keep ticking over - I wouldn't like them to cook because it was an extra job for me to clear up. When I look back now I realize it was dreadful but doing that sort of thing helped to keep my sanity because I had a very set routine so that everything I had to do, got done and nothing was left undone. It didn't give time for



allowing my children to mess about with flour and water and make a mess. It wasn't on my schedule to clear up the mess.

Part of being a teacher is being very organized. Therefore I was very organized at home as well and I think my children very much wish I had not been so organized. I had everything timed to make sure everything was done and that we were never late. The regime must have been awful for them. The more responsible jobs I got at school, the more organized you have to be so the more organized everything became.

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My career has meant everything to me because I know the one prevailing factor, thread, in my adult life has been my job. It has been very important, something I have been committed to. I certainly see it as a career rather than as a job. Also I have gone up through the scales and beyond - there's not a lot of people who have had three headships! Probably I have been too career-minded. The whole thing of education fascinates me.

I've probably been very selfish in it. If I'd not been so selfish, I'd have stayed scale one with not many responsibilities and given more time to my children. But I was fascinated with the whole thing and I couldn't let go. It wasn't a secondary thing. It started out as a means to earn money but once I started to climb, I wanted to go on and on.

Identity and fulfillment for such a woman.

The compensatory career strategy is usually adopted following failure.

The fifth career strategy, the fourth involving promotion, is 'the compensatory career'. With such a strategy the woman's motivation to achieve career success is usually associated with some perception, on the part of the woman herself, of failure in the personal sphere. In such a case, career success follows a personal crisis; disappointment in the family sphere seems to explain the desire to seek promotion; career achievement appears to be an attempt to compensate for what are perceived to be personal shortcomings. Women whose career strategies might be termed compensatory usually work extremely hard at their careers. They get a great deal of satisfaction from their work and they devote a great deal of time and effort to it. Those who are pursuing compensatory career strategies have usually begun their careers by developing one of the other strategies. Then, because of failure in the strategy itself or because of failure or perceived failure to achieve personal goals, the career then becomes the greatest source of personal satisfaction and sense of identity. personal circumstances change and as different external

conditions. So a woman might begin with an antecedent career strategy. But if a marriage or a partnership then breaks down or if the postponement of parenthood results in an inability to have children, then the woman might adopt career achievement as a compensatory goal. Alternatively, a woman might begin with a two-stage career strategy. But if she is unable to fulfil the expectations she has set herself with regard to family and personal goals then the career might take over as the main source of satisfaction. Or a woman might begin with a subsequent career. But if marriage and parenthood fail, in some way, to meet up to the woman's expectations then the career is likely to become the main source of

identity and fulfilment for such a woman.

The compensatory career strategy is usually adopted following failure in some respect of another strategy, therefore. Women might begin their careers by regarding the personal as important as the teaching career or, alternatively, career might always have been the priority. But, following a change in the ordering of priorities or following a perceived failure in the personal sphere, either over marriage or parenthood, then the career and work become supremely important and the major source of satisfaction, self-image and identity.

#### CAREER STRATEGIES UNDER DIFFERENT EXTERNAL CONDITIONS

The five career types identify the main differences in the strategies whereby women primary teachers cope with and manage their dual responsibilities, in their private and public lives. Over the course of their working lives, some women will move from one career type to another as their personal circumstances change and as different external conditions alter the rules of the teaching career game. Other women will continue to develop the same strategy for the whole of their working careers. In such cases, the women's own personal circumstances and different external conditions will have confirmed and consolidated the women's original views of themselves, their work and their teaching careers.

Individual attitudes to work and to career are influenced by numerous factors. Amongst the most important for women primary teachers are their own personal circumstances and responsibilities, expectations and ideals in the sphere of home and family life. These circumstances are

then negotiated around various characteristics of the primary teaching labour market in different conditions of expansion and shortage or contraction and plentiful supply of primary teachers. Thus individual women seek a balance between these sets of factors.

In primary teaching there have always been substantial numbers of women developing accommodated careers. If women feel that their main source of identity and satisfaction is their personal and family lives, then their teaching work will be interrelated around and balanced with their family and other social obligations and experiences. It might well be that increasing numbers of men are also beginning to appreciate the importance of non-work aspects of their lives. Scase and Goffee's male managers (1989) ranked 'family and personal relationships' above 'career achievements' as their most important source of satisfaction. If this is the case, then more and more individuals, men and women, might come to question the importance of promotion if promotion means increased responsibilities and less and less time for family and other commitments. However, such accommodation strategies are very dependent on a labour market which permits differential degrees of work commitment and on favourable external conditions of expansion whereby additional workers can be employed to undertake any tasks that are likely to remain undone as a result of contract-only work commitments by large numbers of workers. But accommodation strategies are a great advantage to employers in particular labour markets in that such strategies reduce the pressure on the limited number of promotion posts. And there is an additional advantage to employers when it is women who are developing accommodation strategies. It has been assumed in the past that women's attachment to full-time paid work is less than their male colleagues. Thus, in times of plentiful supply of labour, large numbers of women can be persuaded to give up their



paid work for full-time domestic labour which is, after all, the woman's main source of identity. Accommodation strategies, particularly by women primary teachers, are likely to continue to be important therefore both for individual teachers and for employers in the primary teaching labour market, under conditions of expansion or contraction of the profession.

However, other career strategies are much more dependent on favourable external conditions. This is particularly the case with subsequent careers. These women want to have and to care for their own families and this is their main priority early in their teaching careers. Only when they return to teaching after fulfilling such personal goals do they begin to contemplate another, a career goal of promotion and then they take steps to achieve their promotion posts. In the career history group of headteachers, there was a preponderance of subsequent careers. But these women were returning to teaching and achieving their promotions in the 1960s and early 1970s. It is likely, therefore, that the high numbers of successful subsequent careers in the career history group is a reflection of the expansionist economic and educational climate that resulted in teacher shortages which enabled these women to achieve promotion in their careers after completing what they saw as their family goals. Thus career achievement for this group of women is best explained as the coincidence of two factors: their attitudes, desires and, maybe, needs to be wives, housewives and mothers and the favourable external economic, political and educational circumstances, over which the women had no control but which in these cases enabled them to develop their teaching careers after their completion of family goals. Expansion of teaching did not result in increased promotion opportunities overall (see chapter two). But it did increase the range and diversity of successful career strategies.

In a different economic and educational climate, as in the reduced and more stringent educational service of the 1980s, then a subsequent career might increasingly come to mean more modest career achievements. Under conditions of stability or reduction in numbers of teachers, promotion opportunities are not necessarily reduced overall but there are likely to be fewer successful subsequent careers and, as a consequence, many more accommodation careers. This is likely to result in an increase in career ambivalence among many women, and in the confirmation of wife and mother identities as the main source of satisfaction for married women primary teachers. For women strongly committed to career and to promotion in the career, the strategy most likely to be successful in a contracting occupation is the antecedent career. Most of the younger headteachers in the career history group had pursued antecedent careers. Their attitudes to family goals were different in that family goals were secondary to career goals. Such attitudes might be necessary for career success in a reductionist economic and educational climate. Contraction of teaching does not reduce promotion opportunities for women overall, but it is likely to reduce the diversity and viability of particular career strategies.

If women remain committed to family goals as well as to career achievement and if promotion opportunities do not change significantly, then the two-stage career is a possible development. The limitations of such a strategy have been explored in relation to primary teaching and the potential of this strategy will be small unless the achievement of a 'threshold position' will enable women to take time out of teaching and then return and continue to develop their careers more or less where they left off. A headteacher position might constitute such a threshold but such a strategy is again dependent on favourable external conditions.

When there is a plentiful supply of qualified and experienced primary teachers competing for headship posts then it is by no means certain that headteachers who break their service will be able to successfully compete for headship positions on their return. Thus, only by remaining in a headteacher post and keeping the career ticking over for a few years while family commitments are heavy, could such a strategy be certain to succeed. So, women who begin with a two-stage career strategy might move into the antecedent or into the compensatory categories if they alter their priorities with regard to family goals or, alternatively, might have to remain content with more modest career achievements if the career intentions of the two-stage strategy can not be fulfilled.

Compensatory career strategies are less dependent on external structural factors and are more a consequence of the expectations, attitudes and priorities that women have in respect of their family relationships. If women have high expectations with regard to personal relationships and if these are not met, then compensatory careers are likely to result. Also, any increase in pressure of work, if this puts stresses and strains on family relationships, then women might increasingly turn to promotion in their careers as a substitute for discontent or perceived unhappiness at home.

The incidence and the likely success of any career strategy in an occupation like teaching is dependent, therefore, on the coincidence of the attitudes and expectations of the women towards their family role and the external structural situation (usually of expansion or contraction) within the occupation itself. Expansion of teaching does not automatically mean expanded promotion opportunities. On the contrary, if other conditions (such as numbers of schools) stay the same, then promotion opportunities will be reduced as more teachers are competing for

the limited number of deputy and headship posts. But expansion of teaching does increase the range and the diversity of 'successful' career strategies available for women primary teachers. The primary teaching labour market will modify its facilitating and limiting characteristics according to the demand and supply situation for primary teachers. The strategies of individual women (and men) teachers will also have to adapt and adjust accordingly.

It has also to be recognised, that each strategy has its attendant personal risks. Each of the strategies identified can involve and entail problems and difficulties for women in their work and in their personal lives and such problems have to be confronted and managed. Mostly, the problems arise when the woman changes her mind but with certain strategies the difficulties are incumbent in the strategy itself.

The problems attaching to the accommodation strategy are few as long as the woman does not change her mind about the ordering of her priorities. This strategy, where the woman puts domestic and family obligations first and paid work and career aspirations second, is the most socially acceptable career pattern, particularly for married women. As long as women remain content with this order of priorities then role conflicts for such women will be minimised. Problems will only begin if women, who are developing accommodated careers, at some stage change their minds about ambition and promotion achievement. If family responsibilities are removed (following the death of elderly parents) or are considerably reduced (as when children become adults and eventually leave home) then some women might look again at their teaching work and wish to pursue newly developed career aspirations. In times of expansion and shortage of teachers, some will be able to develop subsequent careers. But particularly in times of ready supply of primary teachers, and even



for many in times of teacher shortage, large numbers of women will continue with accommodated careers, with or without experiencing satisfaction in their work.

The personal dilemma intrinsic to the antecedent career is similarly whether the woman can maintain in this case the precedence she has given to career for the whole of her working life. The risk attendant on such a strategy is, again, the risk that the woman might change her mind. If the woman is then unable to fulfil her newly identified personal goals (either for a particular kind of marriage relationship or for parenthood) then the career might become the primary source of satisfaction, self-image and identity, not through choice but through the need to compensate for what are newly perceived to be short-comings or failures in the personal sphere.

The career risks inherent in the two-stage strategy have already been identified. For the woman who breaks her teaching service, particularly uncertain is the extent to which she will be able to return to a roughly equivalent career position which would enable her to continue to develop her career goal while maintaining her family responsibilities. The personal risks that might attach to such a strategy are the dilemmas that are commonplace for women who pursue two full-time roles: anxieties about maternal or spouse guilt and work competence; worries about spouse competition or the mutual handicapping of spouses in dual career families; worries over meeting the demands of highly complex work and family coping strategies; and the constant physical, mental and emotional tiredness that attaches to trying to do everything well.

The personal risks inherent in the subsequent career are less acute since, like the accommodated career, these women feel that they know where their priorities lie even if they are not always able to meet their own

expectations of themselves. Once the woman has resumed her career then she is likely to experience many of the practical dilemmas that confront women pursuing two-stage strategies although the dilemmas are likely to be less intense and for shorter periods. The more important risk attaching to the deferment of promotion is the likelihood that the career goals will never be achieved. Of course career goals might never even be formulated and this would mean career accommodation. In such a case, the woman would be reconciled to lack of career achievement because of the necessity of fulfilling family responsibilities. Thus, as with the accommodated and the antecedent career, the main risk associated with the subsequent career is if the woman changes her order of priorities during the course of her life and is then unable to achieve her career goal. Some women are able to postpone career ambition and still achieve promotion. But career success following such a strategy is heavily dependent on favourable external structural factors and labour market processes over which the woman has no control.

The compensatory career involves less risk in that it is, by definition, based on a perception of failure in the personal sphere and a resultant transfer of focus on to career as the main source of satisfaction, self-image and identity. The problem inherent in a compensatory career strategy is that these women have experienced a degree of failure in the personal sphere, an area which they acknowledge to be important to their sense of identity as women. The difficulty, therefore, is the difficulty that might attach to purposive dedication to a single goal, a career goal, if that goal then proves to be inadequate or insufficient. However, a compensatory strategy can work well in that at least these women do have a meaningful alternative.

In general, then, the analysis of the detail of career strategies

is a constant reminder of the variety, variation and complexity of women teachers aims and ambitions both for their teaching work and for their personal and private lives. Where some career models have made assumptions about career intentions and ambitions, the analysis of subjective career strategies can illustrate the balances that individuals try to achieve between their work and family lives and the problems and difficulties that any such balance will entail. But, in addition, the analysis of subjective career strategies, can illuminate the range of responses that individuals can make to the constraints and opportunities in the labour market for primary teachers. Such constraints and opportunities will be influenced by wider structural conditions, particularly of expansion and contraction in the numbers of teachers. Thus the analysis of subjective career strategies can illustrate the linkages between career contexts, external conditions and labour market processes, and the attitudes, expectations and experiences of individual women (and men).

## Chapter 5

### INTERRUPTING THE CAREER AND RETURNING TO TEACHING

There are certain key events in the lives of individual men and women which have major consequences for their work and for their careers. Such occurrences arise out of and are connected with their personal and private lives and they can have short or longer term repercussions. Such events include things like the illnesses of family, including extended family, members, marriage and childbirth. But the responsibilities arising out of such events bear more heavily on women than men and, as a result, women's work and careers in primary teaching are likely to be more dramatically affected.

The tensions that arise from balancing teaching work and domestic demands are not confined to married women. Those men and women teachers who are single do not have the support and assistance of partners and sometimes even limited support and assistance is to be preferred to none at all (Scase and Goffee, 1989). But single women, more than single men, have to cope with responsibilities for elderly parents and other dependent relatives (Finch and Groves, 1983). All teachers, men and women, can choose to remain unmarried. However, the opprobrium which attaches to the status of 'spinster' is greater than that which attaches to 'bachelor' (Spender, 1980) and therefore women are under greater social pressures to marry. Certainly the large majority of teachers, women and men, do marry, at least once, at some stage in their careers. But the effect of such unions on the careers of women teachers is different from the effect on the careers of their male colleagues (Rapoport and Rapoport, 1978; Finch, 1983). Once married, there are two jobs of work, two careers, to be coped



with and managed. And for most women (though not all!) this means that their own careers become secondary while their husbands' careers take priority. There has been no repeat of the national survey to up-date this

In addition, most married women teachers at some stage leave teaching in order to cope with family responsibilities. Usually this involves leaving to have and to care for their own babies and young children although wider family responsibilities, to husbands and to parents, can sometimes involve a break in teaching service for women teachers. Not all teacher-mothers interrupt their teaching work. Some will take only their maternity leave and return immediately to the classroom and indications are that such behaviour patterns among teacher-mothers might be on the increase; nearly two-thirds of the primary and secondary teachers on maternity leave in the I.L.E.A. survey (1985) intended to return to work after their maternity leave. But most teacher-mothers, particularly in primary education, will leave teaching for shorter or longer periods. Some women will leave and never return. Others will leave, return then leave again, teaching intermittently as they build and care for their families. Some women teachers will continue to do part-time or supply work for the remainder of their working lives. But the majority of women teachers, and the proportion is growing, will at some stage return full-time to their teaching work and will begin again to develop their teaching careers. Women returners constitute a substantial proportion of the teaching service. An NUT survey (1980) estimated that approximately 65-70% of the female teaching population (primary and secondary) eventually break their service. The report goes on to assert that "when grossed up, this figure represents about one third of the entire teaching force - a sufficiently large group for note to be taken of their needs and interests" (NUT, 1980, p. 45). This percentage might have been reducing

during the 1980s as a result of career uncertainties and increasing numbers of women teachers taking only their maternity leave (ILEA, 1985), although there has been no repeat of the national survey to up-date this figure. But, nevertheless, leaving and then returning to teaching continues to be an important career strategy for large numbers of women teachers.

The terms 'broken' or 'interrupted' career are used to describe this work pattern among women teachers. Researchers and commentators have sometimes used the terms as part of an explanation of why women do not achieve promotion in teaching to the same extent as men (Turnbull and Williams, 1974; NUT, 1980). Acker (1983) criticized a number of such studies which seemed to explain career differences between men and women in teaching in terms of women's deficiencies. Such explanations develop in the following way: women and men begin their (teaching) careers at the same time and with similar sets of qualifications and ambitions. The large majority of men and women teachers will marry at some point. Marriage increases the ambitions of many men teachers to seek promotion and to develop their careers since the men now assume the main breadwinner and family provider responsibilities. Because of financial reasons, many men teachers achieve promotion up to the highest position they can within the hierarchical structure of posts that constitutes the promotion ladder. But married women teachers are less ambitious to develop their own careers since they frequently have to move because of their husbands job changes and because they are beginning to contemplate, or may actually be experiencing, parenthood. Then, at some stage, a large proportion of married women teachers break their teaching service. They leave teaching in order to have and to care for their own families, hence their teaching careers are interrupted. Eventually, these women return to teaching.

But the break of service will have had a dramatic impact on the teaching career. Returning women teachers will be behind their male colleagues in the promotions race since the men will have advanced their careers while the women were out of teaching. Many women might decide not to seek promotion, not to add to their teaching responsibilities because their family commitments are still heavy. Alternatively, some women might attempt to revive or renew their career commitments, might seek promotion, but because of their breaks in service, they experience difficulty in achieving promotion and developing their careers.

By means of such an explanatory model researchers have indicated, often by statistical analysis, the significance of the break in service for the careers of women teachers. The research of Ollerenshaw and Flude (1973), based on two large postal surveys of women returners and would-be returners both primary and secondary, produced a number of generalizations about the characteristics of women teachers who break their teaching service. Turnbull and Williams (1974) in a detailed statistical analysis, considered to what extent a break in service accounted for the imbalance of earnings between men and women teachers. The National Union of Teachers (1980) produced a report, together with the Equal Opportunities Commission, which analysed the effects of a break in service on the scale positions and promotion prospects of a sample of NUT women members. More recently, Grant (1987) has considered how the effects of a career break were exacerbated by a promotion structure which emphasized length of teaching service and I have considered (Evetts, 1986) how a number of 'human capital' factors (such as continuous teaching experience and length of service) affected the promotion positions of men and women primary and secondary teachers.

However, some of the married women who take time out of primary



teaching do gain promotion and some are successful in achieving headteacher posts. It is necessary to emphasize that these women are not the only 'successful' ones. The notion of 'success' is subjective and married women teachers with their own children who remain in the classroom on the lower salary and responsibility levels might regard their careers as highly successful. Suggestions by Hilsum and Start (1974) that there was a "strikingly low promotion orientation" among women teachers in general, have been heavily criticized (see NUT, 1980). Indeed, Silverstone (1980, p. 44) argued that "it could even be the case that the profession is secretly pleased to have a body of workers whose aspirations are not high and who thus ease the pressure on career posts within the profession". But it is necessary to remember that promotion achievement is not the main objective of all (women) teachers. For some women, a strategy whereby promotion achievements remain modest, would constitute a successful resolution of the conflicting demands of family and work on the women's time and energy. In other words, it is important to remember the diversity of career objectives. As Silverstone continued (1980, p.44), "the danger lies in assuming that all women will fulfil this (unambitious) role. They patently do not".

An alternative explanation for the 'willingness' of women to break their teaching service for family commitments and to return in times of teacher shortage and high demand for their labour, is the marxist conception of 'a reserve army'. According to such an explanation, women workers together with other groups constitute a reserve army of labour upon which capitalism can draw as and when it requires additional labour. Then once workers become surplus to the requirements of capital, they can once again be expelled from the workforce and rejoin the ranks of the reserve army. The specific formulation in Marx's theory is not always



maintained in subsequent analyses and recent authors have claimed that women constitute a separate and distinct category not included in Marx's original formulation. Thus Beechey (1987) has argued that women constitute a specific form of the reserve army which is different from the forms described by Marx. But that, in fact, married women are a 'preferred source' since they have another role, their family role, into which they can disappear when discarded from the labour force. Beechey noted the central importance of women's family obligations and the dominant ideological assumption that this is women's primary role. Thus not only do women easily return to the family but also they readily move into and out of paid work, both full-time and part-time work, as and when required.

Clearly there are aspects of this explanation that would seem to have immediate application to the position of women in the primary teaching labour force. Local educational authorities, like capitalist employers, respond to fluctuations in demand for primary teachers by making use of female labour. Women are encouraged to remain in or to return to teaching and their fulfilment of dual role responsibilities is facilitated in times of teacher shortage. But in times of contraction of the primary education service, when there is a plentiful supply of teaching labour, then such encouragements and facilities can be withdrawn and as a result many women teachers will leave their jobs and remain as housewife/mothers, which is, after all, their primary role.

The reserve army concept is useful on an abstract level of analysis to help to explain how some women are absorbed into and expelled from the teaching labour force under certain supply and demand conditions. But it is only a partial account. The details of the ways in which the reserve army is mobilized or laid off under particular conditions remains

unexplored. In order to explain this, it is necessary to understand the interrelationship between factors at different levels of analysis. We need to know how different external conditions come to influence and affect the individual strategies of women teachers.

In considering the significance of a break in service to the careers of women primary teachers, it is necessary to ask a number of questions. Do women experience their periods of time at home, probably caring for young children, as a 'break' and as an 'interruption' in their teaching careers? Was the break totally negative in the consequences and effects which it had on women's subsequent career experiences? Obviously the idea of a break in teaching service includes many different types and is probably infinitely variable. Some women have only one, relatively short break and then return to teaching full-time. Other women have several breaks, their returns are intermittent and short, probably by supply or by part-time teaching and this variable pattern of service continues for a long period of time. So how far can the length, the timing, and the type of the break be used to explain the subsequent attitudes of women teachers to their careers?

For women teachers who have experienced such a break in service, the return to teaching is a significant event both in terms of family relationships and arrangements and in terms of how women view their work and the careers that are being re-entered. The return to work and career after a period at home as full-time housewives and mothers was termed 'a critical status transition' by the Rapoport (1976) and by Rapoport, Fogarty and Rapoport (1982). So, the manner of the return, how the return came about, is interesting in itself and might be significant in helping to explain the subsequent career attitudes of women teachers.

The career history data from the women headteachers will be used to

illustrate some of the attitudes and experiences of women teachers to breaks in and returns to a teaching career. Of the twenty-five women primary headteachers in the career history research, fifteen had broken their teaching service to care for their own young children and had subsequently returned to teaching. Of the other ten heads, one had been a late entrant to teaching, eight had had no children and hence no break for childcare responsibilities, and one had continued to teach without a break. The extracts used come mainly from the returners since the others had not interrupted their teaching service. But the wider external conditions of expansion and contraction of the teaching profession, together with the relevant characteristics of the primary teaching labour market, also need to be considered as variables with which to interrelate the career strategies of women teachers.

#### EXTERNAL CONDITONS

The economic and political climate together with prevailing demographic factors resulted in a growing demand for teachers and in increased numbers of teachers in the 1960s and 1970s and a reduced demand and contraction of numbers in the 1980s (see chapter two). Although the significance of such changes has been questioned in respect of promotional opportunities for women primary teachers, nevertheless the significance of growth or decline in numbers of teachers, for women who want to take a break and then return to teaching, is less problematic.

Expansion means that those taking a break will find it easier to return. In the 1950s and 1960s, some new schools were built and all schools were expanding. The post-war increase in the birthrate was maintained until the 1960s. The primary school-age population was

increasing until the 1970s with a drop in the early 1960s (see chapter two). In the 1950s and 1960s schools were full and in spite of emergency training of teachers after the war, there was a shortage of teachers particularly in the infant and primary sectors, the sectors where women teachers have always outnumbered men. So women primary teachers and particularly infant teachers were in short supply. Married women teachers were encouraged to return to the classrooms. Many local educational authorities established nurseries for, or gave priority in existing nurseries to, the young children of married women teachers in an attempt to get such women to return to staff the increasing and expanding schools.

The women in the career history study were very aware that the shortage of teachers in the 1960s and 1970s was one of the main factors in their decisions to return to teaching. It seemed that most of the women had returned earlier than they had originally intended:

You see, it was very different then because there were not enough people for the number of jobs that were going.

I mean I never intended to go back when (my son) was eighteen months old ... But they sort of urged you to go back and made it so that you really felt well you couldn't refuse. (Mrs. Northfield)

I actually had somebody knock at the door and say, "I understand you are a qualified teacher. You are interested in slower learning and we are desperate. Would you consider coming?" I don't think I would have left my children if I hadn't had a chance like that. (Mrs. Pointer)



The acute shortage of infant teachers had influenced some of these women to move to infant schools from other sectors. Mrs. Firth moved to infants teaching (from junior) on her return.

I went back to teaching in 1963. At that time, there was a tremendous shortage of teachers and I used to get telephone calls asking me if I would go and do some supply work. I did some supply work in an infant school. Infant schools were packed out and it was infant teachers they wanted more than anything at that time. I was invited straight back as soon as I could come back.

Contraction of the numbers of teachers since the late 1970s meant that women teachers were more reluctant to leave their teaching jobs since they were uncertain that they would be able to return, when and how they wanted, to their teaching work. Partington (1986) has argued that career disadvantage is particularly marked for women primary teachers who break their teaching service. Reduced opportunities to return heighten the dilemma for young women teachers: to continue with their careers or to take time off to have their own children. When numbers of teachers are being reduced, then there is less movement of teachers. Teachers achieve a position and then stay put, unwilling to risk the uncertainty of new posts and responsibilities. A more static teaching labour force, with reduced opportunities for movement in and out, is one of the consequences of contraction. The consequence for women teachers is to reduce their options and make realization of their career strategies much more difficult.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRIMARY TEACHING LABOUR MARKET

There are certain features of the primary teaching labour market which can assist the woman teacher who, in order to cope with family responsibilities, takes a break from teaching and then returns. The first feature is the ready availability of part-time and supply work. As Table 2.5 in chapter two indicates, the numbers of part-time teachers in primary schools reached 21,935 in 1975. Then numbers fell until 1980 (16,426) but then started to rise again (23,692 in 1989). It was feared that part-time teaching posts would be one of the casualties of the general cut-backs in teaching posts and nationally numbers did indeed fall for a period. But if part-time posts continue to increase then the reduction will have been only a temporary feature. Supply work is also constantly available in primary teaching, where supply teachers fill in for an absent teacher for short or longer periods. The Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (1987) restricted the use of a supply teacher to cases of teacher absence of more than three days. This reduced the availability of supply work to an extent. But generally the ready availability of part-time and supply work in the expansionist 1960s, the reduced availability of such posts in the 1980s and the increasing demand again at the end of the 1980s, has meant that women who perceive themselves to have heavy family responsibilities can opt for such teaching posts rather than for a full-time commitment. The part-time strategy has been and continues to be important in enabling women to continue their teaching work. Part-time and supply work also provide contacts, knowledge about vacancies, and even references for teachers who want to return to a full-time position. So the availability of part-time and supply work has been an important feature of the labour

market for women teachers who want to return. The one reservation that must be made about part-time and supply work for women teachers is that such posts are basic scale (in the past mostly scale one) posts only. This has meant that although such posts enable women to maintain a link with teaching and with schools, they do not enable women to increase their teaching responsibilities and expertise and hence to improve their promotion chances.

Other features of the primary teaching labour market and of the work culture of primary teaching were identified by the women heads in the career history study. Of particular importance to returning women teachers were certain characteristics of the working day together with the use of special dispensations that could enable women more easily to combine their teaching and childcare responsibilities. The compatibility of teachers hours of work and holidays with those of their children's at school or in nursery classes was generally accepted as a perk for women teachers with family responsibilities. In small primary and infant staffrooms, staff and work meetings could be arranged to the convenience of women members of staff. In the period of severe teacher shortage, many local educational authorities had opened nurseries specifically or primarily for teachers children which some of the heads had used. Many primary and infant schools had nursery units into which a returning teacher could admit her pre-school children and several of the heads had used such facilities. Primary and infant teacher-mothers could arrange for their children to be enrolled in their own schools rather than their local schools and such an arrangement had facilitated childcare for the heads when they had returned to teaching. A child who was mildly indisposed could go along with the mother to the mother's classroom for the day. When teacher-mothers of young children arrived on time rather

than early to their classrooms and left immediately the schoolday finished, this was not made an issue for critical comment. By means of such arrangements and dispensations, the women headteachers as returning teacher-mothers had been helped to cope with their family and their teaching responsibilities.

A final characteristic of significance which was important to the women heads when, as teacher-mothers, they returned to their teaching work was the close-knit occupational community that existed among primary and infant teachers. The occupational community was also important in recruitment and was reflected in the informality with which part-time, supply and even full-time vacant teaching posts were filled. The small number of staff in primary and infant schools meant that teachers in such schools knew each other very well. The career history headteachers referred to the mutual assistance between teachers in schools where one teacher would help another in the knowledge that such assistance would be reciprocated (see chapter six). This also meant that these heads as managers wanted to preserve harmony in primary and infant staffrooms. The women heads in the career history study reported that in order to fill a vacant teacher post they would select staff who would fit in and not disturb the unity and common purpose of the teaching team. This was also important in the case of part-time and supply staff. The supply lists of primary teachers kept by local educational authorities were only rarely called on by these headteachers. The heads preferred to find their own replacements and to find women that they knew. So the heads had their own lists of out-of-service women teachers in their areas; women who were able and willing to fill-in for an absent teacher, to do a few days supply work and to help out, sometimes for longer periods, when teachers were absent. Their lists included former women teachers at the school,



teacher-mothers of children currently in the school, friends or acquaintances of current teaching staff, wives of male colleagues, and so on. If these contacts failed to come up with a woman teacher who was readily available, then a head would contact another head to see if her list could provide a replacement. In the close-knit community of the primary and infant staffroom, these women heads preferred to bring in replacements that they knew rather than a stranger whose name had been obtained from a local authority supply list.

The primary teaching community was of crucial significance to the heads in the career history study when as teacher-mothers they had returned to teaching. It is an important feature that will probably need to be used by many women teachers who want to return. The occupational community can ensure part-time or supply teaching work by means of which in due course the women will be able to return full-time. In a time of acute teacher shortage, the existence of such an occupational community can ensure that women teachers return to teaching, and to full-time teaching, more quickly than they might have done otherwise. The existence of such a community might also be important in influencing the women's decisions, on their return to look for promotion (see chapter seven). Insofar as the community keeps the women in contact with teaching, this also means that the women do not lose their contacts with headteachers, inspectors and other authority figures who might subsequently be influential in the competition for promotion in their careers.

In a time of contraction of numbers of teachers, the teaching community and the informality in the filling of part-time, supply and some full-time teaching posts, could become even more critical for the women who intend to return. It might be the case that authority figures (heads, inspectors) in the community would strongly influence who should return

when there is a shortage of teaching posts to return to.

## TEACHER STRATEGIES

### Length of the Break

Ollerenshaw and Flude (1973) had found that women at home were anticipating a break of eight years on average before returning to teaching; whereas for the actual returners, the average length of break was sixteen months less. The NUT survey (1980) indicated that, of those women teachers who broke their service, some two-thirds (64%) were out of teaching for more than five years. For the headteachers in the career history research, there were some similarities in the lengths of the career breaks that these women had experienced. For these women who subsequently became heads, their periods out of teaching were very short. In addition, there were certain common features in that their breaks had not been complete; most had worked part-time or done supply teaching even when their own children were very young. Out of the career history group of headteachers, Mrs. Porter and Mrs. Tanner had had the shortest periods out of teaching. Mrs. Tanner was out of full-time teaching for 18 months to care for her baby son. But, after only six months, she returned to part-time, supply teaching for two or three days a week, leaving her son with her mother:

The reason I went back, apart from it being nice to earn some money, was that they had been calling me out to help almost from the first September after he was born.

Teachers were in very short supply.

After a year of part-time supply work, Mrs. Tanner returned full-time. She had no more children. Similarly, Mrs. Porter had had only 18 months out of full-time teaching. She had had two children but because her husband seemed unable to keep a job, she had to return out of financial necessity. He left her a year later. Mrs. Porter was not in a strong bargaining position. She would have preferred a part-time job at this time but the job she was offered was full-time and in a primary school in a rural area in the north of the county where she was living at the time. She had been trained for secondary teaching, but she felt she had no choice. She took the job and returned to teaching: her elder child was eighteen months old and her younger six months old.

The longest periods out of full-time teaching of heads in the group were eight years (Mrs. Dutton), six years (Mrs. Collins) and five years (Mrs. Edwards). Mrs. Dutton had done some part-time teaching. Mrs. Collins and Mrs. Edwards had both worked at pre-school play groups while they were out of teaching before returning to full-time infants teaching. The other heads had had periods of time out of full-time teaching varying from eighteen months to eight years. The variations in the lengths of their breaks and in their personal circumstances were great but all illustrated the use of certain characteristics in the primary teaching labour market in developing their strategies. Mrs. Ellis had had four years out of full-time teaching during which time she had done some supply work. When she returned, she taught part-time for a term until, with her youngest child in the nursery of the school where she taught, she felt she could return full-time. Mrs. Spencer had five years out of full-time teaching. She had done supply teaching inbetween having her first and

second child and she returned full-time when her younger child was three. Mrs. Howard returned to full-time teaching when her first son was nine months old in order to help her husband pursue his career. She took a further two years out of teaching to have and to care for her second son. Then she returned to part-time teaching for four years until she felt ready for a full-time teaching commitment. Mrs. Firth had approximately one year out of teaching for her first child. Then she did part-time supply work until the birth of her second child. After another year off with her second child, she again returned to part-time supply work until her second child started school. Then she returned to full-time teaching.

The different lengths of time that these teachers took out of teaching and their returns either to full-time or via part-time and supply work indicated the variation (and complexity) in strategies regarding breaks of service of women and in the manner of their returns. But the similarities in their experiences were also significant. The large majority of the women heads were not out of teaching for very long periods. Generally, they kept in touch either through supply work and/or through part-time teaching and where this did not happen, they had teaching-related experience (playgroup work) which could ease their returns. One of the consequences of their breaks only being partial and short was that these women did not feel any anxiety about their returns to teaching. In their short periods of time out of teaching they did not feel any unease about their abilities to cope again in the classroom. The women teachers who do experience such feelings of self-doubt are those who have been out of teaching for longer periods and who have not continually re-boosted their self-confidence in their abilities to teach through part-time or supply work. Ollerenshaw (1973), when considering the needs and desires of would-be returners for refresher and retraining



courses, had concluded that professional confidence decreased in direct proportion to the length of the absence from the classroom. The lack of anxiety about the return in this group of women teachers was also explained by the fact that, as primary and infant teachers, their work was not perceived as stressful. This applied particularly to the infant teachers, where their work as mothers had seemingly reinforced their feelings of competence in their abilities to cope with young children and in many cases had increased their understanding of the educational needs of the young. Several of the infant headteachers in the career history group spoke very positively of their periods of time at home as full-time mothers and of how they returned with an increased understanding of, and new ideas about how to teach, young children.

#### Timing the Break

The timing of a break in service for women teachers is contingent upon family events. Some events can be controlled, anticipated and planned for but others are by their very nature uncertain and unpredictable. Some women teachers may be able to plan when and how many children to have and might be successful in achieving such a plan. But for other women, either they do not plan or their plans do not succeed. However, other family contingencies are even more uncertain. Women cannot plan for husbands' job changes or for increases in responsibilities to parents and in-laws, even though women might anticipate such events.

In the face of such uncertainty and if large numbers of women continue to regard their families as their main priority, then the woman teacher's career strategy is likely to be affected accordingly. The teaching career will be fitted in with and around other family

responsibilities. The accommodated career is the most likely career strategy. With such a strategy, the break is not planned in advance in order to fit in with career ambitions. Teaching service is broken as and when family responsibilities determine that the woman should be doing other things. With the accommodated career, promotion is unlikely or is a factor secondary to and negotiated in with and around constantly changing family commitments and responsibilities.

Where women teachers have achieved promotion in primary teaching, there are three alternative ways of timing their promotions in relation to career breaks. The first strategy is to leave seeking promotion until after the break and the return to full-time teaching. The second is to seek promotion first and to delay the break for childcare until promotion to a desired stage has been achieved. The third is to attempt to achieve both simultaneously, taking only minimal breaks for childcare perhaps after gaining experience and achieving promotion at the lower levels.

Out of the fifteen headteachers in the career history study who had broken their teaching service, fourteen had developed their careers according to the first strategy. Only one head had achieved any promotion prior to taking a break. Only Mrs. Firth had achieved a deputy head position prior to taking time off to have her own children. But even Mrs. Firth denied that she was promotion ambitious at this stage. She explained that she had achieved her deputy head position as a result of her wish to move from secondary to primary education. She was advised that the best way of getting out of a secondary school and into primary education was to apply for promotion in a junior school and that was how and why she achieved her deputy head position the first time. However, when she returned to teaching, after a break, she had to return to a scale one post and that 'demotion' had annoyed and motivated her to regain her

former status. Five years after she returned full-time she became a head. So, of the fifteen heads who had broken their teaching service, none was ambitious to develop their career until after the completion of family building goals and the return to teaching. Their ambitions to develop their careers by achieving promotion had not crystallised as aims or goals until their own young children were settled at school and they could return to a full-time teaching commitment.

The second strategy is to achieve promotion first and to postpone the break for childcare. None of the headteachers in the group of returners had pursued such a career strategy. But four of the heads without children of their own were still young enough to have their own children and two of the four were hoping to start families which might entail a break in teaching service in the future. But this remained an untested strategy as far as the career history group of heads was concerned. In a time of contraction of the numbers of teachers it seemed a risky strategy; it was uncertain that a woman who was a headteacher before taking a break could realistically expect on her return to compete against teachers with continuous service for a headteacher post. This might be a career strategy for an expanding education service therefore. The general acceptance of a situation where women returners return as basic scale (formerly scale one) teachers only, regardless of their positions prior to their breaks in service, makes this a hazardous career strategy, although the risks might be reduced if teacher demand increases and the numbers of schools expands again in the 1990s.

The third strategy is not to take a break but to attempt to achieve both family and promotion goals simultaneously. This strategy is more likely to be successful than either of the previous in a time of stability or contraction of teacher numbers. But it entails taking only minimal

breaks for childcare and many women are reluctant to hand over their responsibilities for childcare in order to achieve promotion in their teaching careers. From the group of career history headteachers, only one (Mrs. Grant) had pursued such a dual strategy. Mrs. Grant had not had a career break and return and she had many doubts and misgivings about her childcare arrangements as she explained:

(While I completed my college course) my baby daughter stayed with my friend. When I went back to college, college was marvellous and I only went into college three mornings a week. So I was with my daughter most of the time. I'd do my work and my piano practice in an afternoon while she had a nap. So I saw a great deal of her, so I had almost two years with her as a mum. Then it was very tough in my first year as a probationary teacher. I didn't see a great deal of her and I think that is my biggest regret. I'd always planned to have a family and be at home until they were five and perhaps have two children and stay off until one was at school and the other at nursery, if it was ready. This was my idea. But I wasn't able to choose. I was told I must come back and I must do my probationary year adjacent to my college course. There was no possibility of having another break until my child was old enough to cope. I found that very very difficult. I suppose I could have given up my career. But given my family background, I felt I couldn't do that. I felt a duty to my family, a duty to the college and a duty to the LEA that was funding



me at college. I felt grateful I had had a full grant. I'd waste the public money if I didn't complete my course. It was an enormous tension, my responsibility to my child and my responsibility to all these other people, and this was my only opportunity. I still don't know whether it was right or not. I chose to do my probationary year. And it was hard and it broke my heart.

I did one term in that school and the headteacher said I ought to go for promotion. And I got promotion. I got a post of special responsibility in another infants school. I was in charge of an annex of three classes, to deal with all the parents, the dinner money, all the secretarial work, all the library. So it was heavy administratively. I had to arrange staff rotas. It was like a mini school. Before I took that my husband and I had a long discussion. I would perhaps have preferred to have another baby and then after time off, start to climb. But he was adamant there would be no more children. I found this very hard. But I wouldn't go against him on this. I found myself facing, well this is my family. I've been robbed of bringing up my child as I would want to. Now what? My daughter didn't need a full time mother any more; she was fully adjusted, she needed to go to nursery. So I had to come to terms with actually becoming a career teacher which up till then I hadn't been. It was always you must do this because of circumstance. Then I had to make some conscious

decisions about my career. I decided to make a career and to make it earlier than I ever thought.

A career strategy which entails seeking promotion at the same time as fulfilling heavy family responsibilities is fraught with difficulties for women teachers as Mrs Grant's account illustrates. There were practical, family management difficulties (further explored in chapter six) such as making arrangements for a very young child as well as fulfilling domestic responsibilities. These had to be fitted in with her enlarged administrative load at school. But more pervasive in Mrs Grant's account was the guilt she experienced both over her childcare and about competing with her husband (a teacher also) in career terms (Evetts, 1989b).

It seems that taking a career break in order to care for very young children is likely to remain a dominant career pattern for teacher-mothers in primary education. Most of the teacher-mothers in the career history sample had taken a break and then looked for promotion; they had managed to do both, by postponing the development of their careers until their family goals were complete. However, these women had benefitted from expansion of numbers of teachers which had facilitated their returns and might even have encouraged the development of their promotion ambitions. For women in a contracting occupation their career and family goals pose dilemmas which are not so easily resolved.

## The Return

The return to teaching is a highly significant event for women teachers, marking a change in family relationships and experiences and the need to balance work and family commitments. But the manner of the return, how the return comes about, can illustrate many of the characteristics and processes already identified in the primary teaching labour market. From the career history data, it became apparent that the informal occupational community, the personal contacts of friends, former colleagues, heads and inspectors, had been influential in putting in motion and in eventually bringing about the returns of the women heads when they were classroom teachers. Mrs. Tanner explained her return in the following way:

Teachers were in short supply and I kept getting messages from my friends who by that time were perhaps deputies, and people I had been friendly with at the school. First it was my friend who rang me - they'd got three staff off and could I possibly go and help.

For Mrs. Ellis it was a former college associate who set the process of returning in motion and who was perhaps significant also in the first steps up the promotion ladder:

It's quite interesting because I was shopping when I met a girl who had been in the year above me at college. By that time she had just been appointed as the head of an

infants school and she said, "Oh, do you want to come back? We need good teachers". So she said "Go in and see the inspector". So I went in with the kids and said "Look I'd like to come back but I can't conceive a full-time job at the moment. I don't think I can cope with that". So the inspector said "Well, how would you like to do it?" So I did three days at first and the children were looked after by a neighbour while I did the three days. But I soon got into the state where I couldn't stand the fact that somebody else had the class for two days and disrupting things I'd been doing. I soon got into full-time again and the children were in the nursery. It so happened that they put me into the school where this person was the head. And then, eighteen months later, I got the deputy headship in that school.

Mrs. Collins had not intended to return to teaching until her younger child was established at school. But, again, a chance meeting with a teacher that she knew, necessitated an immediate change of plan:

I was stopped by a teacher I knew who said "Can you come and help us out at the local school, down at the bottom of the hill? We're short of teachers". And I said, "Er .... I hadn't considered going back yet". She said, "Well perhaps part-time". So I said, "Well I do a lot of work with the playgroup. It would be similar



hours. But I wouldn't want to leave (my son)". "Well, talk to the head. I'm sure you could bring him with you". Well I had always said I wouldn't have a child of mine in a school where I taught. But it all happened so quickly, I didn't really have time to think. The head said "It's a full-time teacher I want not a part-time, and yes you can bring your son". This was just before the Easter holidays and she wanted it for the summer term. So I had a day to think about it and I said yes.

In describing her second return to teaching, after her second child, Mrs. Howard claimed that:

Someone phoned me up and said that they were desperate for somebody to come and do a few mornings remedial reading. It was a deputy head that phoned me, a friend. We'd worked together briefly and our husbands knew each other.

Mrs. Spencer was living in Scotland at the time of her return. She was not known in the local teaching community, therefore, but her husband had let his work colleagues know that his wife was a teacher. This resulted in the initial contact. Again, Mrs. Spencer's original plan had to be changed and a quick decision made:

I hadn't planned to go back to teaching until my

daughter was five. But she was three in fact when I went back. I had a phone call one evening from the wife of a friend of my husband who said could I possibly go and help out at one of the local schools because two of the staff had had a bad car accident going to school. One teacher was seriously injured and was likely to be off for a long time. So with two teachers off they were short of supply staff. They wondered if I could possibly go along and help out. I said I could only go if I could bring my daughter with me. It was an infant class. She was three and could fit in with what was happening. She was actually a little nuisance. But I went along and the staff were very kind and supportive. The headmaster was delightful.

In fact, for most of the returning teachers in the career history group, the phone call or the chance meeting with a former colleague or teacher friend were instrumental in the initial decision to return. In the expansionist days of the 1960s, schools to return to could be chosen for their easy accessibility, because they had a nursery or because it was the school the teacher had been at previously. Often these women teachers could choose schools according to their own priorities and, in the situation of teacher shortage, they were in a strong bargaining position. They could choose the schools they wanted to return to and negotiate over their childcare arrangements:

I went to see the Area Education Officer and I said I

would come back part-time if he would like me to. And, of course, teachers were short in those days and he jumped at it. (Then, when I heard about the new school) I went in and said, "Look, I'll go full-time if you let me go to this new school that's opening here". And he jumped at that. So, I was lucky really. (Mrs. Dutton).

I said I was only interested if my son could get in the nursery. So the Area Education Officer approached the head and the head said, "I'm sorry the nursery is full". So I said, "Well that's no good to me then because I would want my little boy to be in the nursery". Well - he said he was going to keep in touch. But I'd only arrived home when the phone rang and they said they'd fitted him in the nursery if I would come back to school. So I said that I would take the job. (Mrs. Holden).

The inspector said if I was interested to give them a ring. I mean life was so different in those days, give them a ring and they'd see what they could do for me. In fact, the inspector rang me up and asked if I could go and see them. I said if I got a job I'd need somewhere that had a nursery place and I actually went back to the school I'd been at previously. (Mrs. Edwards).

So, for these women who had taken time out of teaching to care for their own families and who, after their returns, eventually became

headteachers of primary and infant schools, an informal occupational community of personal contacts, of friends, former colleagues, heads and inspectors had been important in putting in motion and in eventually bringing about the returns of these women to teaching. The influence of the informal occupational community is not confined only to bringing women back into teaching. Such an occupational community, where members share a common value system and work culture which results from a common training and work experiences (Salaman, 1974) is explored further in connection with the management of family responsibilities (chapter six) and the beginnings of career development (chapter seven).

#### RETURNING TO TEACHING: CONTEXTS AND STRATEGIES

The interrelationship of women teachers strategies with various characteristics of the primary teaching labour market in the general climate of teaching expansion or contraction can help in understanding the significance of the break in service and return to teaching for women teachers. According to the headteachers in the career history group, the shortage of particularly primary and infant teachers in the expansionist days of the 1960s was a major factor in influencing both the length and the type of career break which they took and could also be significant in explaining the manner of their returns. In the headteachers accounts, in the primary teaching labour market of the 1960s, numerous methods of assistance were devised to enable teacher-mothers to return to their teaching work. Similarly, the existence of an occupational community ensured that these women teachers returned to teaching, and to full-time teaching, more quickly than they might have done otherwise. These women were sought out and their returns encouraged. Individual teacher



strategies could be developed making use of helpful features (such as expansion of schools and numbers of teachers and work culture facilities) and negotiating negative factors (such as the need to re-climb the promotional ladder and the lack of continuous teaching experience).

The notion of a reserve army can provide a partial explanation of why the conditions for women primary teachers were so different in the 1960s compared with conditions in the 1980s. But in order to further develop the analytical usefulness of the reserve army concept, it would be necessary to explore in whose interests were the expansion and subsequent reduction in the numbers of teachers. It would be necessary to consider the similarities and the differences between local government employers (local educational authorities) and capitalist industrial employers, since the interests of the two types of employer are not necessarily the same. But the most significant limitation of the reserve army concept in this discussion is its failure to explain the detail of how different external conditions came to affect individual strategies. In primary teaching, if many women teachers constitute a reserve army of labour then other women and men teachers are the recruiting sergeants who will mobilize the reserves when necessary. The details of how together with a more adequate explanation of why, constitute unfinished business for advocates of the reserve army concept as an explanation of the characteristics of women's work in primary teaching.

In general for women primary teachers, personal circumstances and individual inclinations will outweigh any of the contextual factors. Some women will choose not to return or to remain in part-time posts for the rest of their teaching careers whatever the external conditions. But the need to recognise and to include external conditions and characteristics in the primary teaching labour market in any explanatory model became

apparent in the changed conditions in the 1980s. Strategies which included not completely breaking teaching service became increasingly important in the tighter economic and educational climate. The primary teaching community of those who knew each other and maintained links with authority figures in schools might have become more important in determining who would return when there were fewer posts to return to and less movement generally within primary teaching.

But how appropriate is it to describe women teachers as experiencing 'broken' or 'interrupted' careers? The experiences of the career history headteachers alerts us to the fact that the terms must only be used with care. It was part of the career and family strategies of several of these women to take a break from their paid work in order to have and to care for their own children. Mothering was an important and a desired part of their family strategies and they necessarily (in their view) finished their teaching work when they reached the child-bearing stage. Also, these women did not necessarily perceive their breaks in service to be totally negative in terms of their paid work competence and career ambitions. The break is seen to be 'a problem' for women's careers only because career progress is assumed to be centred solely on paid work and because career is assumed to involve continuous work experience, orderly development and promotion up through an occupational hierarchy of positions. The careers of married women sometimes fit such a model. But most commonly the careers of married women will involve negotiating and balancing work and family obligations in developing their career strategies. It is important to remember the influence of external conditions and of the characteristics in particular labour markets, in affecting the outcome of such strategies.

Chapter 6

MANAGING CHILDCARE AND TEACHING RESPONSIBILITIES

Women teachers will have responsibilities in at least two spheres: the public sphere of work and the private sphere of home and family. Particularly if the woman is married, but also if she is caring for parents or other relatives, the woman's domestic obligations to partner, home and family will be life long. Both women and men have responsibilities in both spheres. But whereas men can usually divide up their time and their commitments, devoting week-days to their work and their careers, and evenings and weekends to their families, for women these areas of responsibility and the expectations that women feel themselves to have, cannot be so readily compartmentalized. In the past this has resulted in much discussion about women's two roles (Klein, 1965; Fonda and Moss 1976; Barker and Allen, 1976; Mackie and Pattillo 1977) and about the problems of combining the dual responsibilities (Fonda and Moss 1976; Harper and Richmonds 1979; Yeandle, 1984). But in recent analyses, researchers have more often focused on the politics of family life (Morgan, 1985) and on ideologies and structures which underlie male and female differences in role perception (Sharpe, 1984; Finch and Groves, 1983; Farganis, 1986).

The difficulties of fulfilling work and family responsibilities become particularly acute when there are children in the family; when, in addition to maintaining the home, herself and husband, the woman is responsible for the care, safe-keeping and emotional stability of the children of the marital union. In the large majority of cases, childcare is the woman's responsibility and women themselves acknowledge, accept and enjoy childcare as their primary responsibility, as perhaps the most



important part of their family role (Wearing, 1984). But childcare cannot just be a task, a job to be done. Childcare also involves a strong emotional commitment, a love attachment that includes an intense, close and sustained relationship between the mother and the child. Women themselves define their own expectations about mothering: they set their own standards of childcare. But they are guided in this by cultural ideals about motherhood, about what a 'good' mother is supposed to do and to be. Such ideals of motherhood are different in other societies, in different historical periods (Badinter, 1981; Dally, 1982) and in any particular period such ideals will vary between different social classes (Hardyment, 1984; Riley, 1983) and might also vary between different geographical areas and regions of a country (Badinter, 1981). But for women who work in Britain today, sometimes (and increasingly) out of necessity, frequently out of choice, childcare and its emotional commitment have to become one out of a number of other responsibilities. A few researchers in the past examined how women who work actually coped with childcare along with their other responsibilities (Thompson and Findlayson, 1963; Yuckin and Holme, 1963). But the most wide-ranging study so far is the research currently being carried out by researchers at the Thomas Coram Research Unit at London University's Institute of Education (see for example Moss, 1986; Brannen, 1987). This is a continuing longitudinal study of full-time working mothers and their children.

In terms of pre-school childcare, most working mothers give up their paid work for a period. For those who want or need to return to work, some attempt a family strategy for coping with very young children, where the mother works while the father is at home or while the father is at home in the evenings and at weekends. This is common practice in



nursing, for example, where the mother works at nights and/or at weekends and it is common also in factory work where the mother undertakes the twilight shift (Sharpe, 1984). Others make use of wider family or neighbours and friends for childcare when they return to paid work, frequently part-time (Yeandle, 1984). For working mothers whose wages and salaries permit, they can pay for childcare with childminders or in private nurseries (Scarr and Dunn, 1987). But public provision of pre-school childcare for working mothers is virtually non-existent; most local authorities only provide nurseries for children deemed to be at risk.

Phillips and Moss (1988) have compared childcare provision between countries in the European Common Market. This study concluded that Britain was one of the meanest countries in Europe providing publicly subsidized day-care for only one per cent of children under the age of three. In the provision of services for children between three and school age, British policies looked even worse. Only 22% of British children got into nursery school and Britain was the only country in Europe to provide nursery sessions in shifts as a matter of policy. The hours offered in this way were usually two and a half hours a day. Such provision was irrelevant for working mothers but more, such provision actually discriminated against children whose mothers were not available to fetch and carry every day (Phillips, 1988).

It is not surprising, therefore, that most mothers leave work for the period when their children are small and become full-time mothers at least until their youngest child is at school. However, it is likely that labour market changes will give women's positions in the job market a boost and finally succeed in making childcare a political issue. In the early 1980s when unemployment was the major political concern, the women

who stayed at home were viewed by politicians as an asset. But in the 1990s, in many parts of the country and in many occupations, the fear is of labour shortage. Between 1988 and 1995, the labour force aged between 16 and 24 is projected to decrease from 6.1 millions to 5 millions. The number of graduates is also expected to fall (Pearson and Pike, 1988) thus resulting in labour market shortages particularly in professional and managerial occupations. One of the few remaining sources for filling these gaps is to further increase female economic activity rates and in particular the activity rates of married women with children. It is in this context that a Ministerial Group on Women's Issues was established in 1988. Ways of increasing childcare provision have been explored. At the end of the 1980s it remained unclear whether increased childcare provision should be supplied by employers and companies or whether childcare should take place in the community, with a strong part being played by voluntary organizations such as the Pre-school Playgroups Association. But whatever proposals eventually emerge it seems that it will have been labour market shortages, rather than the needs and wants of women themselves, that will make childcare provision one of the central issues of the 1990s if indeed this does happen.

Also, it is important to remember that if women are to be encouraged back or to remain in the workforce, women's family responsibilities do not only include childcare. Malcolm Wicks (1989), the director of the Family Policy Studies Centre has demonstrated that "there is another aspect of our changing demography that has substantial implications for many women who are already, or potentially, in the labour market". This aspect is the anticipated growth in the numbers of old people in the British population. Wicks argued that those over 85 will double in number between 1981 and 2001, from half a million to over one

million. It is important to remember therefore that more and more workers, or would-be workers, will also be carers. Wicks estimated that about one in nine of all full-time workers and one in six part-timers were carers and that caring was a common reason why women leave employment.

It is also important to emphasize that family responsibilities such as childcare do not stop, although they might be eased, when children attend school. School hours do not correspond with working hours even for teachers; the taking and particularly the collecting of young children from school is a constant worry for working mothers; for school holidays, including occasional days, special arrangements have to be made; and for the sick child, complex coping strategies need to be devised. Jobs which allow flexible hours and are sympathetic to childcare responsibilities are at a premium.

So, for women teachers who return to primary teaching or for those who continue to teach with only the break for maternity leave, how do such women cope with childcare alongside their teaching responsibilities? For women who work in a professional or semi-professional occupation such as teaching, their work commitments can never be only minimal; it is difficult only to put in the hours and nothing more of the self. Some of the dilemmas that arise for women in professional occupations have been explored (Musgrave and Wheeler-Bennett, 1972; Silverstone and Ward, 1980) and there has been some examination of the historical roots and the psychological implications of a dual-role identity for professional women (Roland and Harris, 1979). But there is little recent data about how women in professional, semi-professional and white-collar occupations have actually managed their family and career commitments: about the strategies that women have devised for coping with the various demands that are made of them and that they feel themselves to have.

Women primary teachers, together with other women, usually give up paid work for a period when their children are very young (NUT, 1980). This remains the most common coping strategy. Then, when they return to teaching, they can return full-time, part-time with a varying time commitment, or they can undertake supply work, full-time or part-time, for short or longer periods. A new strategy involving job-sharing, is being tried in some local education authorities and all such schemes including the provision of creche and nursery places are likely to increase if the predicted shortages of trained labour in the 1990s affects primary teachers. So, how do women who have young children and teaching work cope with their childcare obligations and expectations while they are fulfilling their teaching responsibilities? Do coping strategies need to be different in different external conditions, of expansion or of contraction of numbers of teachers? Are there any features of the primary teaching labour market that can assist or handicap women in the carrying out of their dual responsibilities? Then, against these contexts and characteristics, what expectations do women set themselves in respect of childcare? What strategies do women devise to meet such expectations and what resources are available for the development of such strategies?

The career history accounts of the women headteachers illustrated

#### EXTERNAL CONDITIONS AND THE PRIMARY TEACHING LABOUR MARKET

These women had commented on how the local education authority had opened

Certain characteristics of the primary teaching labour market operate differently in times of teacher shortage and times when there is a plentiful supply of teachers. In the previous chapter it was demonstrated how, in a time of professional expansion when there was a shortage of primary teachers, certain characteristics and processes of the labour market could operate to bring women teachers back into primary teaching.



In a similar way, these characteristics and processes can work to assist teacher-mothers in carrying out their responsibilities as teachers and as mothers of young children. Primary and infant teaching, as a job of work, has some advantages over other occupations. The availability of part-time and supply work, together with any new job sharing arrangements and nursery facilities, are very positive advantages for teacher-mothers, providing facilities and easing routes back into teaching for women with childcare responsibilities. But it is also necessary to emphasize the advantages for the primary teaching labour market, and for teachers' employers, in having a body of reserve labour which can be encouraged to increase or reduce its hours and work commitment as and when required. Other occupational characteristics such as the shorter working day and the concurrence of the mothers and childrens holidays are well-known perks-of-the-job for women teachers. These advantages are not as clear-cut or as straight-forward as they seem at first sight since few teachers finish their work when the bell goes at the end of the school day; and the need to travel home, if the mothers school is some distance away, can seriously limit this characteristic as an occupational advantage. The career history accounts of the women headteachers illustrated several advantages that attached to primary teaching as a job of work. These women had commented on how the local education authority had opened nurseries specifically for teachers' children or had given priority in existing nurseries to the children of returning teacher-mothers. Also, children could attend the nursery classes in their mothers schools, or be admitted early into the infant classes. Then, when they were old enough to be admitted into school, they could attend their mothers rather than their local schools. Headteachers could give permission for

teacher-mothers to bring their school-age children into school for an occasional day, should a child be on holiday or be off-colour. In addition, headteachers could arrange work rotas and staff meetings to enable teacher-mothers to meet their childcare expectations, to work through their lunchhours and to leave promptly at the end of the school day.

But in addition to these characteristics already identified the women heads described other characteristics of the primary teaching labour market which operated in the period of teacher shortage to assist women in the conduct of their teaching and childcare work. An important feature of the work culture of primary and infant teaching, according to the women in the career history study, was the relationships women teachers had with work colleagues, with fellow women teachers and with headteachers. In small primary, junior and infant staffrooms there were important community networks of colleagues and friendship groups of teachers which could develop into supportive systems of assistance, cooperation and exchange. Such social networks had many of the characteristics of occupational communities. The women did not necessarily live in the same geographical area (and in the past, this was regarded as a defining characteristic of an occupational community) but, nevertheless, they had a common working life-style, similar values, goals and expectations. But perhaps more important in this context, these communities of women teachers helped each other to manage their family and work commitments. In addition, according to the career history heads, teacher colleagues in the staffroom or in the wider teaching community, assisted teacher-mothers in the working out of their occupational and family identities and in arriving at the compromises they had to make between family and teaching commitments at different times in their lives. Colleagues and headteachers were called

on to comment and eventually to endorse strategies. Colleagues and headteachers gave practical assistance and advice. They related their own experiences and were able to give informed opinions about strategies as they were in the process of being developed. Then, unless external conditions or personal constraints were paramount, women teachers in the career history study were able to choose their own identities according to the values, goals and ideals they held to be most important. By comparing sometimes conflicting role models and role strategies, and bearing in mind their own situations, women teachers could identify and develop their own work and family strategies.

But, in contrast, in times when the numbers of teachers were being reduced, as in the 1930s, and when there was a plentiful supply of teachers, then these features of the primary teaching labour market operated in different ways. The availability of part-time posts and supply work was cut back, in some areas more than others, although part-time work was again on the increase nationally by the end of the 1980s (see chapter two). The situation was variable between local educational authorities, some reducing full-time while others reduced part-time posts. But there seemed to be a more or less constant demand for supply teachers even when numbers of teaching posts were contracting; although since the Teachers Pay and Conditions Document (DES, 1987) supply teachers can no longer be called into a school until a teacher has been absent for at least three days.

The advantages of primary teaching as a job of work such as hours of work and school holidays, continued much as before and remained one of the attractions of primary teaching as a job of work for teacher-mothers. But there was no longer any priority given in nurseries to teachers' children. In the nurseries attached to schools, teacher-mothers were



competing for places alongside other working mothers and the shift system of only a morning or an afternoon session, worked against all working women. Teacher-mothers could perhaps pull strings and use their occupational position to get their children a place and even a full-time place. But when teachers were plentiful, headteachers would not necessarily be sympathetic to such special pleading. Women primary teachers could still opt to have their young children in their own schools although the wisdom of this was questioned by teacher-mothers in the career history study. These women considered that it caused difficulties for the child to have a mum as a teacher in the same school.

The teacher network and occupational community which was so important in assisting teacher-mothers to fulfil their teaching and family responsibilities would also be curtailed in times of plentiful supply of teachers. In general, there would be less sympathy for and accommodation of the women teacher with family obligations. Women would be reluctant to ask for assistance or for special arrangements. When teachers were plentiful, where there were scores of applicants for every post and where there was teacher unemployment, women teachers would know that they had to cope or stand aside. In addition, heads would be less sympathetic to the minimally committed teacher who left school on the dot at the end of the working day. In the allocation of tasks and duties, all teachers would have to pull their weight. In smaller schools, where there were fewer incentive allowances to be allocated to those teachers undertaking additional responsibilities, pressures would be on all teachers to share the tasks. This would result in resentment of any teacher who, for whatever reason, was reluctant to take on additional obligations. The career teacher, who wanted promotion, would be able to show commitment, keenness and enthusiasm but the teacher-mother who enjoyed classroom



teaching solely, would find such an accommodation strategy a less viable alternative. The former flexibility which benefitted teacher-mothers in the time of teacher shortage would be replaced by rigidity in the formalization of regulations and teacher contracts of service. The informal control over staffs and schools formerly exercised by heads, would be replaced by more centralized control, managerialist goal-setting and consequently standardization. This increased formalization and standardization would apply to teaching as a job of work and to teaching as a promotion and career structure. The contraction of teaching and the ready supply of teachers would reduce the options and limit the strategies for women teachers in the 1980s.

In the 1990s the teacher demand situation is likely to change yet again. Demand for primary teachers is increasing and there are some shortages of teachers particularly in London areas and in other large cities. Where primary teachers are in short supply then the characteristics and processes in the primary teaching labour market will adjust yet again in attempts to fill vacant posts by encouraging (married) women teachers to remain in or return early to primary classrooms.

## TEACHER STRATEGIES

How do teacher-mothers who have continued to teach, or returned to teaching, full-time, part-time or by supply teaching, cope with their childcare obligations and expectations while they are fulfilling their teaching responsibilities? Women teachers are responding to general expectations about the responsibilities of 'a good mother' and 'a good teacher'. They themselves are defining the nature of the expectations as well as devising a response to them, although they are guided in this by

cultural ideals about motherhood and educational ideals about the good teacher. In the career history study, the women heads who were mothers were asked about three tasks that could be used to illustrate some of the concerns of working women with young children. These motherhood tasks, among others, had to be managed for the women to fulfil their work roles. The three tasks were:

- (i) the care of the pre-school child;
- (ii) the delivery of the young school-age child to school at the beginning, and return home at the end of the school day;
- (iii) the care of the young child who is unable to go to school because of illness.

What expectations did some women primary headteachers set themselves in respect of these three tasks when they were the teacher-mothers of young children? What strategies did the women in fact develop to cope with the expectations they had set themselves? How did some women make use of certain characteristics of the primary teaching labour market, in times of expansion and of contraction, to meet the expectations they had set for themselves? In examining the alternative strategies, the career history data will be used to illustrate the main resources that the women primary headteachers had used to meet their expectations.

### Care of the Pre-School Child

In considering the alternatives for care of the young pre-school

child, it is necessary to remember that women primary teachers will probably have been influenced (they may even have been taught in their college courses) the various theories of child development elaborated by child psychologists of the 1950s and 1960s (for example Bowlby, 1947; 1951; 1969). Such theories had seemed to suggest the necessity of a close and continuous relationship between a mother and her child, particularly her pre-school child. Such interpretations have subsequently been criticized (Apter, 1985; Scarr and Dunn 1987). But guided by the ideology of motherhood, of what a good mother is supposed to do, most women teachers wish to become full-time mothers for the period when their own children are very young. In the career history sample, of the seventeen headteachers who had had children of their own, fifteen had left teaching for a period; one had been a late entrant, becoming a teacher after her children began school; and one teacher had continued to teach. But this teacher (Mrs. Grant) had not intended to continue in teaching:

I'd always planned to have a family and be at home until they were five. Perhaps have two children and stay off until one was at school and the other was at nursery.

(Mrs. Grant)

those first few months. It wasn't a particularly easy return to teaching.

The need to complete her college course and her probationary year's teaching determined Mrs. Grant's decision to remain in teaching. Other factors (see chapter five) also influenced the women's decisions to remain in or return early to their teaching work. These included difficult personal or family circumstances like the break up of a marriage (Mrs. Porter); or a husband's wish to change career direction (Mrs. Howard); or

personal inclination such as lack of complete satisfaction with the housewife/mother role (Mrs. Firth, Mrs. Edwards); or even expansion of education and a severe shortage of teachers (Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Dexter). But one of the likely consequences of the early return strategy was feelings of maternal guilt since prevailing notions of 'the good mother' required the mother to be at home with her young child (Wearing, 1984). Tensions between personal expectations regarding care of the young pre-school child and other powerful forces resulted in personal doubts and unhappiness:

I found a job without any hassle at all and the feelings of guilt because I really wanted to be at home with him. But, on the other hand, I knew that if I didn't earn, there was no chance that (my husband) would have the sort of career that was going to make him a happy man. We found a place in a super day nursery. (My son) was a very sociable, happy baby and he had a lovely time at the nursery. I suffered very badly. I felt it very keenly the day he walked for the first time and they saw it and I didn't and I shed lots and lots of tears during those first few months. It wasn't a particularly happy return to teaching.

(Mrs. Howard)

My main concern was that I knew all the answers, if you know what I mean. Before having my children I'd sat in staffrooms and said, and heard said, "Well what can you expect of a working mum: no time." And



here I was, a working mum with no time for the kids.

That was very hard.

(Mrs. Porter)

The conflicts between work responsibilities and family responsibilities were most acute for these women during the period when their own children were very young. Dilemmas were hard to resolve. Cultural ideals of motherhood, supposedly with the backing and support of psychological theories of child deprivation, seemed to imply that women should be at home with their pre-school children. Most of these women wanted to be at home. Yet, at the same time, a critical shortage of teachers, personal circumstances or personal inclination was pushing these women back to their teaching work. In a time of expansion and teacher shortage, women teachers had more scope for constructing work and family strategies. As has been seen, they could return part-time, thereby partially resolving the childcare dilemma, by giving their children 'quality time' when they were with them. They could undertake supply work, making themselves available only as and when childcare could be arranged. If they returned full-time, then they could remain as classroom teachers and refuse or postpone taking on additional responsibilities in schools. By denying or delaying developments in their own careers, women teachers in the career history study could continue to give the well-being of their children and families the highest priority. In a time of contraction, however, women's scope for constructing coping strategies was more limited and the career consequences of a break or a slowing down of career commitment were likely to be more severe.

In developing strategies for the care of the pre-school child,

women teachers in general will use the resources they have available together with certain characteristics of the primary teaching labour market already described. Women teachers can pay for assistance with their very young children. Places in private nurseries are few and expensive but if there are two incomes in a family, and such nurseries are available, then women teachers can pay for such care in order to continue with their teaching work. Childminders might also be used particularly if the minder is known to the teacher-mother. Living-in nannies and au pair services are sometimes used, though more rarely, by teacher-mothers. But more important, it seemed from the career history study, are the informal arrangements that are made between teacher-mothers, neighbours and friends.

Of the women heads in the career history group, some had paid for day nursery places for their young children (Mrs. Howard, Mrs. Firth, Mrs. Grant). In one instance a cleaner had also been a childminder:

(When I returned to teaching), I had two children still at home all day. I've had somebody in to do housework since (the third child) was a baby and she's been coming daily to help me. So we merely upped her time and she looked after the children.

(Mrs. Dutton)

More frequently in the career history study, neighbours and friends had assisted with the care of the pre-school child until the children were old enough to attend a school nursery. But where neighbours and friends had assisted, payment was usually made because such care involved a more

or less full-time commitment by the carer and formal arrangements had to be agreed.

I happened to be talking to my neighbour one day about this and she had had the sort of job where you couldn't just dash in and out and she said to me, quite out of the blue, "Look, if you want to go back, if you'd like to come to some sort of arrangement with me, I'll look after the baby while you go to work". Her baby was about five weeks younger than mine. So I went to work, she looked after the children and we shared the money. That was how it went.

(Mrs. Firth)

For these teachers, help with the care of the pre-school child from neighbours and friends had been in exchange for a mutually agreed payment. But the informality of the relationship was not affected and the arrangement usually came to an end when the child was old enough to attend a private nursery or a nursery school.

According to the Rapoports (1976; 1978), in dual-career families, or in symmetrical families (Young and Willmott, 1973), husbands and wives were more inclined to share responsibilities for child and home care. There seemed to be little evidence of this amongst these teachers, however. In the career history group, husbands had played virtually no part in the everyday care of the pre-school child. Such a child was the responsibility of the mother. Parents and in-laws had sometimes played a part in enabling a teacher to return to work before her child reached

school age. This was a more frequent source of assistance. With her mother's help, Mrs. Tanner had returned to part-time supply teaching only six months after having her son. Then, after one year of supply work, she returned full-time.

I returned to part-time supply teaching six months after having my son. My mum looked after him. We were living with my mum and dad then. After twelve months doing supply, the authority wanted me to go to work at (a school some distance away) for a whole term. So my mother and I talked it over. I might as well go back full-time so that I know where I am (and wouldn't have to keep changing schools). My mum looked after (the son) until he went to nursery school.

Primary and infant teaching as a job of work has clear advantages over other occupations, even within teaching, in that the work situation enables some reconciliation of work and family expectations. These characteristics of the labour market are important facilitators for teacher-mothers. In the 1960s, in the period of teacher shortage, women teachers in the career history group took their own pre-school children into school with them. There, the children attended the newly provided nursery classes or they sat in with their own mothers classes:

When I returned to work, my daughter was three and my son was four. They went into the nursery of the school where I was teaching. It worked very well because they



had access to me if they needed me and vice versa. It was as ideal to me as it could be.

(Mrs. Ellis)

I said I could only go if I could bring my daughter with me. It was an infant class. She was three and could fit in with what was happening. She was actually a little nuisance. But I went and the staff were very kind and supportive.

(Mrs. Spencer)

In addition, the occupational community of teachers played an important part in supporting these women in their work and family strategies. The support and encouragement of colleagues and, even more important, of the headteacher was a critical determinant of the perceived success of the strategy and of the women's positive attitudes to the arrangements they had made. The community of working colleagues gave support and encouragement, gave practical advice and assistance, helped these women teachers make use of certain occupational advantages and, in general, assisted them as teacher-mothers to develop strategies to enable them to cope with the care of the pre-school child and to feel relatively content with such a strategy.

Some teachers have brought their babies into school with them. Some of my staff who wanted to do supply work when they've had a baby, they'll bring the baby in the pram.

Also, I see that I can put their little ones into the nursery

and a lot of my staff have got children who have gone through my school.

(Mrs. Addison)

In general then, in the care of the pre-school child, the teacher-mothers in the career history group had combined their own resources with the positive characteristics of the occupational culture of primary teaching and of the labour market for primary teachers. These women teachers paid for nursery services when these were available. They were less keen on childminders unless these were known personally to the mothers. But these women were reluctant to hand their young children over to the care of others; the motherhood ideal told them that they should do it themselves. Such ideals made these women hesitate over nurseries and child-minders while their social class position and financial limitations precluded the nanny solution. As soon as it was practicable, most of these women teachers wanted to have their young children in school with them or with other teacher colleagues. Certain facilities in the primary teaching labour market permitted this and the women teachers made full use of school nurseries and admitted their children early into infant classes. The teacher-mothers experiences did not always correspond with their expectations of the good mother role. But certain teacher strategies and particular facilities in the labour market did minimize the dilemmas for most of the teacher-mothers in coping with their pre-school children.

#### The Delivery to School and Return Home of the Child

These childcare tasks will be recognized as constant sources of

anxiety by all working mothers. Arrangements have to be made for the young school-age child to be delivered to school in the morning and returned home at the end of the school day. These are tasks to be managed by the mother for a period but mothers vary as to how long they feel such tasks to be their responsibility. The child's arrival at school has to be no earlier than about half an hour before school begins. Headteachers usually claim that no supervision can be given before this time, as they and their staffs will be making their own journeys to school and making arrangements for the day. This can present problems, therefore, for parents who begin work earlier or at the same time as their children, or particularly if parents have long distances to travel to their places of work. But this responsibility can be fulfilled in numerous ways. Where children attend their local schools, they can walk to school with their own school friends, with older children or with neighbours and their children. Children attending other schools have to be delivered usually by car and arrangements are made by parents and by friends to share this task.

For primary teacher-mothers there are other strategies that can be employed to solve this problem. Primary and infant school children can go with the mother to her school. Alternatively, teacher-mothers can leave their children with teacher colleagues and friends, while they make their own ways into work. For the teacher-mothers in the career history sample, this particular task was not seen as a major problem. It was resolved by them in various ways using strategies which combined the friendship and colleague resources they had available.

However, the return of the child home at the end of the school day is a different matter. This is acknowledged as a tremendous difficulty by all working mothers. For teacher-mothers also, this problem causes

considerable anxiety since they cannot finish at their own schools and be home in time for their children's return from their local schools.

Mothers differ in terms of at what age it is considered appropriate for children to return home and let themselves into the house. Most concede that secondary school children are old enough to let themselves into their homes after school. Most children of junior school age can make their own way home from school since junior schools are usually within easy walking distance of their homes and, anyway, children of this age do not necessarily want their mothers to collect them outside the school gates. However, mothers are in agreement about their dislike of children returning to an 'empty' house. Working mothers are horrified by the idea that their children are 'latchkey children', a media word used in the 1960s to invoke sympathy for children and condemnation of working mothers who could not be home for their children's returns from school.

The teacher-mothers in the career history group felt very strongly that they should have been at home when their children returned from school. But these teachers could not be at home if, as was mostly the case, their own journeys back took longer than their children's. Guilt was the inevitable consequence when strategies did not completely meet with expectations:

Then we thought he could cope and he went to the local school (age 9). He had a key to let himself in and out of the house. So he was a poor little latchkey child.  
(Mrs. Edwards)

Amongst these teacher-mothers, strategies were devised to try to



avoid the child having to return to an 'empty' house. These teachers used any available resource and the arrangements they made were often highly complex. Occasionally husbands were able to help. But, in general, their help was intermittent rather than regular:

(My son) never came home to an empty house. He used to go to a next-door-but-one neighbour until I got home from school. When he was at secondary school, I was generally home before him. And his father's hours were sometimes flexible.

(Mrs. Northfield)

Parents and in-laws were not used by the career history teachers in the delivery or collection of children from school. This remains an option for teacher-mothers with relatives living close, although middle-class mobility patterns mean that few adults are likely to live close enough to parents for this to be an option for many (Edgell, 1980). More commonly, neighbours and friends are called upon to help. In the career history group, several teacher-mothers had had assistance from friends and neighbours. Mrs. Butler's children travelled to school and back on a school bus and Mrs. Butler's friend, who had two children of the same age and went to the same school, would meet the bus and look after all the children until Mrs. Butler returned. This arrangement continued even when the children were older:

When they went to the comprehensive, they always knew that (the friend) was around to go to even when they got

older and they didn't need to go to her. They would let themselves in, but they still went over to (the friend) should there be the slightest problem. I mean, she was a tower of strength to me.

Other teachers had made similar arrangements with friends and neighbours:

I wasn't able to be at home when they came home from school. My neighbour met them. They never went into the house until I came home. They used to go to school in the morning with my neighbour's child.

(Mrs. Firth)

We all arrived home together. If I was ever going to be very delayed for a staff meeting or some crisis, I had a couple of friends near me and I would get a message through to the school instructing the children that they were to be redirected, if you like, and then the friend would have a cup of tea ready and a biscuit or something and then I'd collect them when I got back. But they never ever came into an empty house.

(Mrs. Howard)

It is important to note in addition that primary and infant teaching, as a job of work, has some advantages over other occupations in

enabling women to reconcile their expectations towards their school-age children with the demands of their work. Some of the women headteachers had had their children enrolled at the mothers' school, particularly when their children were young, as a way of managing their expectations to deliver, fetch and be on hand for their children:

While I was there, my daughter became school-age. We didn't want her to go to the local infant school. Being in education, I had the option of taking her with me to my school. So I did. That worked well. My husband dropped us off at eight o'clock in the morning. I didn't stay too late. Usually we caught the four o'clock, four-thirty bus. But it was a long day for her.

(Mrs. Grant)

In addition, it is possible for women teachers to concentrate on their classroom teaching and to decline further responsibility while their children are young. They can leave their schools directly at the end of the school day in order to be back at home at the same time as, or only shortly after, their own children. Many women teachers develop an accommodation career strategy, while their children are young. Women in the career history group had delayed promotion, rejected additional responsibilities and worked through their lunch hours so as to be able to fulfil their teaching responsibilities and yet not be back too late for their own children:

For a while I did leave school early. I used to get

there early, work through my lunchtime and then leave early. I wouldn't take any promotion at all while my family were very much a large part of my life.

(Mrs. Collins)

I rushed out of school; I didn't work late. I got there at eight o'clock in the morning and worked my lunch hour. So I left on the dot, caught two buses home and I was there to meet her when this friend delivered her. I was at home to receive her and that was very important to me then.

(Mrs. Grant)

I managed to be at home when the boys arrived home from school. It used to mean taking a lot of work home to do after they'd gone to bed in the evening. But I always had a horror of children coming home to an empty house, certainly small children. Once they'd got to about fifteen I didn't worry quite so much because it seems silly, doesn't it? I mean, they're quite grown up by then. But I thought coming into an empty house was very depressing and very lonely for a child and this is where the taxis came in. I used to get taxis home from my school. I mean I could have arranged for them to have lifts with friends and be left and I could have been home soon after. But I did not ever want them to have to use a key to get into a cold empty house with no kettle on. We arrived home together and it was a jolly bundle-in, you can imagine. (Mrs. Howard).



But in addition to such occupational advantages, one of the most interesting aspects of teaching as a job of work was the extent to which the women teachers in the career history study had made use of relationships with women teacher colleagues as a way of managing their teaching duties and their responsibilities towards their own young children.

Most of the staff at the school at that time were mothers about the same as me who understood and we covered for each other. I used to pop out to see my eldest son in things like the school sports day or nativity play. Another teacher would take my class and then I would take hers. The head was as kind as that. It took me about twenty minutes to walk there - I didn't drive then. I hadn't a car. I would get there as fast as my legs would carry me, see him, make sure he'd seen me and then disappear. So I didn't miss much. I was lucky.

(Mrs. Collins)

In many important respects, the women teachers in the career history group seemed to have worked together with their colleagues to help to resolve or manage pressing childcare problems. It is possible then that primary and infant staffrooms can form occupational communities of women who have similar working life styles, have similar values and expectations and have either experienced similar problems and difficulties

or have knowledge and understanding of them. In such small groups solutions to childcare tasks can be explored and cooperation can be forthcoming. Of course cooperation is not inevitable and special arrangements or special dispensations for some teachers can cause friction and animosity in staffrooms. But for the career history teachers cooperation was particularly important in helping them manage their expectations about collecting their own young children from school:

I went to see the headteacher at his school and asked if she knew anyone that I could rely on to look after (my son) after school for a couple of days each week. And she said, "Yes, me". She said, "I know what you're doing. It's only two days a week. He's quite welcome to stay here. I'm usually here 'til four-thirty, five o'clock and if I'm not, the caretaker will be here and he'll be quite willing to have him." So that was the arrangement.

(Mrs. Tanner)

It all worked very well because I got good cooperation from the teaching staff of their school. You know, who would have (my children) in their room until I got there and things like that.

(Mrs. Ellis)

There are, then, various highly practical ways in which the teacher-mothers of young children can be helped by colleagues in their occupational community to carry out their strategies for coping with their

childcare and teaching responsibilities. The teacher-mothers in the career history sample had been developing their childcare strategies when their teaching skills were much in demand. Conditions were favourable for individual women teachers to successfully combine assistance from the occupational community with the positive characteristics of the primary teaching labour market in developing their career strategies. But when there is a plentiful supply of teachers, employers in the primary teaching labour market would be less concerned that women teachers should remain in or return early to their teaching work. Similarly there will be less scope for the occupational community of women teachers to exchange assistance and share successful strategies when there is more standardization of teacher contracts and duties. In the past much depended on the attitude of headteachers. A cooperative and understanding headteacher could ensure the success of coping strategies. As yet it is not known how the attitudes of headteachers might have changed in the tougher conditions of a contracting primary teaching labour market. Or, if contraction was only temporary, how heads will adjust in situations of teacher shortage in some areas in the 1990s.

### **The Care of the Young Child who was Sick**

(Mrs. Howard)

Caring for sick children is usually a less frequent event and therefore a rarer problem for working mothers in contrast to the previous childcare tasks which necessitate a regular, daily arrangement. However such events, even if rare, have to be anticipated and appropriate arrangements made. Guided by motherhood ideals, most working mothers have clear expectations about the appropriate course of action if children are ill: mothers should stay at home to look after a sick child. This poses

a real problem for women teachers since they have a responsibility to their classes of children at school and to their teaching colleagues as well as to their sick children at home. But most women are clear that their first priority is the welfare of their own children: a teacher can be substituted for but a mother cannot.

Amongst the women in the career history study, it was remarkable how often the women claimed that their children were seldom ill. They felt that they were lucky in that theirs were not ailing or sickly children. But this explanation occurred so frequently that it was possible to hypothesize that working mothers might have a different perception of what constitutes 'illness' compared with mothers who are at home. Nevertheless, these teacher-mothers were clear that in times of 'real' sickness, their place should have been at home with their children:

I was extremely fortunate in having a couple of children who never seemed to be ill. And if they were, it was during the school holidays. I think we had a couple of bouts of 'flu' and I'm afraid that my attitude then to the job was. I'm not indispensable but I am to my children when they are ill.

(Mrs. Howard)

I took time off. But they were very seldom ill and things like mumps and so on they contrived to have in the holidays which was very convenient.

(Mrs. Firth)

Well, I'm ever so lucky because I have a really



healthy family and the twice that they had child complaints, once was during the Christmas holidays when they both got chickenpox and then when (my daughter) had mumps, it was during the Easter holiday. (Apart from that) it was just an odd day that I stayed with them.

(Mrs. Pointer)

But the childcare ideal which these women were trying to match gave rise to feelings of maternal guilt when the mother was unsure about the seriousness of the child's malaise or when the mother could not stay at home with her sick child:

If I wasn't sure, say if he had a cold, he went to school with - "if you're not very well, your teacher will tell me". It sounds as if I sent him to school whenever. That's not really true. But if it was something minor, it was "go to school and we'll see how you are".

(Mrs. Tanner)

There are times when you think, has he really got tummy ache? Should I really be sending him to school? And then feeling very guilty. You should be at home looking after these children. And I've talked to other mothers who think that. I remembered the times when my mum used to tuck me up

very cosily on the settee in front of a coal fire and I was all cosy and lovely and I should be doing that for my children. I did it at the weekends. I tried to make up.

(Mrs. Collins)

So these teacher-mothers were not always able or willing to meet the expectation that they should stay at home with children who were sick. For teachers, their responsibilities to their pupils at school (whose work pattern might be disrupted), to their colleagues (who might have to double up their classes, lose their free and study periods) and to their heads (who might have to cover or make complicated arrangements) meant that they could not easily ignore their teaching responsibilities. In order to manage this dilemma, the career history teachers devised strategies and such strategies involved the use of several resources and were often highly complex.

For dual-career families (Rapoports, 1976, 1978) and symmetrical families (Young and Willmott, 1973) it was suggested that husbands and wives increasingly shared the responsibility for sick children, taking days off in turn or saving holiday to cover such contingencies. Such negotiations are limited to the extent that women feel it is their responsibility to care for a sick child. If women accept the priority of the husband's work and career, then the men will not be asked and few will offer. Amongst the career history teachers, the women were convinced that a sick child was their responsibility. For the most part the women accepted that their husbands were not able to help. There were two exceptions: Mrs. Edwards' husband was a sales representative and, to an

extent, his own boss; Mrs. Holden was married to a laboratory manager:

If one of the children was ill, he would normally stay at home or if they'd got something like a cold, you know, a bit groggy, he'd often take them out with him in the car.

(Mrs. Edwards)

Well he was never really ill. But my husband always kept some of his days holiday. If (my son) was off, he would be off if I was not able. But if he was very ill, I would be off.

(Mrs. Holden)

More important for working women in times of a child's illness are parents and in-laws, particularly if these relatives live close by. For the women in the career history study, such help had been important in enabling the women to continue with their teaching work.

My mother and in-laws helped. If there was any illness, they would come to the house and stay with the children.

(Mrs. Butler)

In cases of illness, my mum filled in. We used

to fetch her. My husband had a little scooter. He would go to my mums on his scooter and bring my mum back in dad's car, and then reverse this in the evening.

(Mrs. Tanner)

Even if parents and in-laws lived a considerable distance away, some were still willing to assist the women to continue at work:

If it was going to be a lengthy illness, like mumps or measles or chickenpox, then my father-in-law, who had retired (lived on the south coast) was very happy to come and stay with us and look after them. He used to work for British Rail so he had free passes and also could get quarter fares. He loved to come anyway and would come at the drop-of-a-hat.

(Mrs. Spencer)

Usually such assistance was given more than willingly. Only one headteacher, Mrs. Porter, claimed that her parents refused to help. Another, Mrs. Ellis, was reluctant to call on her in-laws because they had expressed reservations about her return to work:

I didn't have to ask for much support from my mother-in-law, (who lived in the same town). She wasn't certain that I was doing the right thing to be



back at work. My place should have been at home with the children, she felt, and so she wasn't always cooperative when I needed her to be. I called on her now and then, but not very often.

(Mrs. Ellis)

So relations with parents and in-laws, particularly if they lived close, were a valuable resource for these women teachers as they are for many working women in enabling them to continue at work when their young children were ill. Friends and neighbours were used less often by teacher-mothers in the career history group in times of sickness, presumably because, if these friends had children of their own, the women would be unwilling to risk spreading the illness. When friends were asked, they did not have their own children at home:

We had this grandma-type neighbour who lived next door. So, if it was just a snuffle, she would say "Oh I know how to cope with that. Off you go". So there was never any period where I had a problem about illnesses.

(Mrs. Pointer)

Again there were advantages attaching to the work situation itself, which were made use of by the teacher-mothers in the career history group when their children were sick. The attitude of the headteacher was critical in determining the successful use of such resources. But having received cooperation from their own headteachers, these current heads were

likely to be more sympathetic in their turn:

If I was unsure, I took them to school with me. The head didn't mind. I know there are mixed feelings about that but I've said to my nursery teacher, she has a daughter who is a bit off-colour at the moment. She has parents who will look after her but they can't tomorrow, so I said bring her into school. So I'm going through it now with my staff.

(Mrs. Spencer)

I was a head quite young so I had a room and there was a little rest bed in there and they might stay with me there a couple of days if they were a little bit off-colour. My own staff bring their children in occasionally.

(Mrs. Ellis)

There were odd times when I would take my children into school. It's all unofficial. It depends very much on the headteacher, the headteacher's attitude to 'alien' children visiting the school. I personally take the view that other children visiting school for the odd day aren't in the slightest bit offensive. If they behaved like morons I would think twice but, in principle, I don't object to it at all. I have come across objections. I was told by one headteacher that I worked for, that it simply was not acceptable that

either of my children should be with me during the school day and those were the days that I said, "Well I'm sorry. I shall not be in then. I have to stay at home because they come first". It just depends on the headteacher's attitude.

(Mrs. Howard)

In general then, in making arrangements for the care of the child who was sick, the career history teacher-mothers made use of their own resources of relatives and friends together with assistance from the primary teaching occupational community. With the reduction in demand for primary teachers in the 1980s, the teacher-mothers' own resources of kin, neighbours and friends would have to play a more important part in the childcare coping strategies of women teachers. However, the attitude of headteachers remained critical. An understanding, cooperative and flexible head increased the likelihood of success of women teachers highly complex coping strategies.

#### MANAGING CHILDCARE: CONCLUSIONS

Women primary teachers in the career history study developed childcare strategies making use of their own resources (particularly relationship resources) and conditions and facilities in their work as primary teachers. External conditions of expansion or contraction altered the balances that were achieved and might, as a result, have affected the satisfaction that individual women felt about their coping strategies.

Of course, at the centre, doing the organizing of the resources and

constructing and managing the expectations, the facilities and the constraints, were the individual women teachers. In constructing their identities, both at work (Nias, 1985) and in their personal and family lives, women in the career history group selected from role models those characteristics that impressed them most. In developing their coping strategies, the women observed and discussed with colleagues, selected from the resources that were available to them (where alternatives were available) and they selected according to their view of what constituted good mothering and being a good teacher. So it is important to remember that the teacher-mother herself, the decision-maker, the organizer and the manager, is the most critical factor. The success of strategies depended on the women's views of themselves and their attitudes towards what they were doing. When the women expressed worries and feelings of guilt about childcare arrangements, then much of their anxiety was about personal identity, about what they appeared to others to be.

Certainly for the women headteachers, satisfaction in their personal lives, as successful wives and mothers, was as important to their views of self as success in their teaching careers. Not all the heads had achieved satisfaction in both spheres and success in the career was little compensation for perceived failure in personal and family life:

probably sometimes I've exhausted myself. But then

The thing I would most like in my life would be to have time to be a housewife and a mother. The biggest present anyone could give to me would be for someone to say you needn't work any more. You see magazine articles, you hear on the media about women wanting to be this and do that. They're obviously women who have never had to work all their working lives, otherwise they wouldn't feel



like that. I would love to be a housewife and a mother.

I've worked all my adult life out of necessity. I would

love to be at home, to take time to enjoy my house, to

take time to cook, to sit, to sew. It's something I've

very much missed out on and something my children have

missed out on.

(Mrs. Porter)

There was a real problem of dual identity (Sharpe, 1984) for these women. They set themselves high standards of mothering and housewifery as well as high standards in their teaching work.

I know that I drive myself to make a good job of motherhood and work. I've felt I must do this the proper way. I must cook proper meals; I mustn't have convenience foods. I must clean the house as thoroughly as I would if I was at home all day. I must make some of the children's clothes because it's good to make the children's clothes. And in trying to do everything probably sometimes I've exhausted myself. But then that's me - I've always been very conscious that I didn't want the children to suffer in any way, or my husband in any way, because I was heavily committed at work.

(Mrs. Ellis)

But in addition to appreciating the complexity of women teachers

strategies and of women themselves as planners, managers and coordinators of coping strategies, it is also necessary to emphasize the importance of certain features of primary teaching as a job of work in facilitating the realization of particular strategies. Of most significance to the women heads, when they were the teacher-mothers of young children, was the sense of community and the sharing of difficulties, experiences and solutions that seemed to exist between women teachers in primary and infant education. In the past, the concept of 'occupational community' has been used to refer to instances where various characteristics of the man's work have resulted in the formation of a community of families who live together in relative isolation and who share a common life style, common values and so on. The necessity of a common residential location was challenged by Salaman (1974) and Allan (1979) further clarified the conceptual issues involved in sociability networks of friends, kin and community. It is highly likely that communities which develop in connection with female occupations, will have rather different sorts of characteristics and there has been some exploration of these characteristics. Porter-Benson (1978) examined the work culture that developed out of the occupational community of women in retailing in American department stores. Melosh (1982) explored how women in nursing developed their own community interpretations of their nursing work which were sometimes at variance with male administrators interpretations. Nestor (1985) examined the networks and communities that were vitally important to women writers in the Nineteenth Century. Wearing (1984) emphasized the importance of female communities and networks in re-inforcing (or challenging) traditional ideas about motherhood.

Women in primary teaching do not live in the same geographical areas; their husbands have different kinds of occupation and, to this

extent, their life styles vary. However, there can be a strong sense of shared identity and there can be considerable fellow-feeling amongst women facing conflicting demands on their time and energy that, amongst males, would be termed 'comradeship'. Amongst females, such mutual support might be termed 'sisterhood' if this concept could be separated from its feminist, consciousness-raising connotations (Radcliffe Richards, 1982: 45-48). Women in primary teaching have similar sets of obligations; there is broad agreement concerning the expectations they set themselves; they have identified and, in many cases, experienced common problems and difficulties; and they can pull together to fulfil the tasks and to share solutions that have worked. Of course, cooperation and special arrangements if these are confined to some teachers can also cause friction, disputes and divisions in staffrooms. This is more likely to happen if some teachers feel that special privileges are being unfairly distributed or might have promotional or salary implications. But, in general, under expanding conditions where there are few worries about job security, then women in primary and infant teaching can work, cooperate and support each other in diverse ways.

With tasks like childcare that are generally agreed to be the woman's responsibility and which women want to do, women will construct strategies making use of work colleagues as well as other relationship resources like kin and neighbours. If the occupation is one which permits a degree of manoeuvre and flexibility in terms of the amount of career commitment and advancement its members display at different stages in their life cycle, then women will manage their family and career responsibilities. Clearly there were grounds for optimism in the way the women in the career history group had succeeded at work and most had succeeded in their family lives. Where women had been permitted a

degree of control over their work situations and how they had combined their various responsibilities, then both family and work expectations could be managed. Also, where women as heads had achieved a measure of control over their staff and their resources in schools, then manoeuvrability, cooperation, assistance and mutual support could be maximised. Mrs. Curtis, a head without children of her own, explained how she was assisting married women teachers on her own staff to manage their family and work responsibilities (though clearly her manoeuvres were limited by local authority demands for a cut-back in part-time teaching posts):

It is just a fact of life that the women have to have the children. If you are out of teaching for a year or eighteen months, you lose your confidence and its very hard to get back. I have several promotable teachers here so I have part-timers in. I've always promoted internally. Then, when the women decide to have their families, I've tried to bring them back as part-timers. I've got two at the moment that came as probationers to me. One has a baby of eighteen months and she's now back two and a half days a week and finds that ideal. The other one had a baby six months ago and is coming back in January just for one day a week. They are both excellent teachers and should be heads, when they get the children out of the way. So if I can keep them ticking over. Your see, it's easier for them to come back here where they know - they know the staff, they know the resources, they know the children - than go and do part-time in a



different school where they will always be struggling.

This makes it easier for them.

I've just had another girl go off on maternity leave and I'm hoping that between the three of them, to mix it so that they can all keep taking up part-time jobs in rotation to having a couple of children. In my way then I think I'm helping them to get over the gap of having children and finding it difficult and then they can come back into the profession because the profession needs people like that. It's a case of juggling and persuading people.

(Mrs. Curtis)

So in an occupation such as primary and infant teaching, where women are in a majority and have achieved positions of authority in schools, then women have been able to acquire a degree of control over work situations, over the career developments of staff and over the allocation of career resources. However, in primary teaching in the 1980s, conditions were different. The formalization of teachers contracts of service, the beginnings of teacher appraisal and the increased standardization of the promotion route to a headship in primary teaching, all meant less flexibility, manoeuvrability and influence by heads on the work practices and career patterns of their staffs. This would also mean fewer choices and a restriction of childcare management strategies for women primary teachers.

## Chapter 7

### THE BEGINNINGS OF PROMOTION AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The different responsibilities that men and women primary teachers perceive themselves to have in the personal sphere, result in different experiences of career. In particular, such differences result in gender-linked variations in attitudes to promotion in the career. There are wide differences between women, as there are differences between men, in attitudes to promotion. It is necessary to remember the extent of such variations among women primary teachers and what factors seem to be important in influencing any particular woman's attitude to career. Then it might be possible to suggest whether or not there are important gender differences, or whether such differences are individual and circumstantial, and therefore affect men as well as women. This chapter will consider how some women primary and infant headteachers became career ambitious in the sense of wanting to achieve promotion to management posts in schools. It will also consider the different times in their teaching careers and the different stages in their personal life cycles that these women began to climb the promotional ladder that led eventually to headship posts and beyond.

It is important to emphasize again that the achievement of promotion is not the hallmark of 'success' in the primary teaching career. The notion of success is subjective and a married woman primary teacher with her own children might be more than content to remain as a classroom teacher on the lower salary levels. In other words, some women might be unwilling to take on the additional responsibilities that go with promotion posts. For such women this may constitute a successful compromise of family and teaching commitments and responsibilities. Such

strategies would be perceived by individual participants as successful subjective careers. Clearly it is impossible to estimate the proportions of women primary teachers who are in this situation willingly rather than unwillingly (say, because they have been unable to achieve a promotion post). However the numbers of women primary teachers who opt for temporary or more permanent part-time posts and the large movements of women teachers into and out of teaching gives some indication of the complexity of motives and strategies that are devised by individual women teachers in particular to cope with pressing work and family responsibilities.

But significant numbers of experienced women primary teachers do, at some stage, want to achieve promotion, to earn a higher salary and to want more say in the management of their schools. What variation is there in the stage and manner of realization of promotion ambition? But firstly what differences in external conditions and promotion structures, and secondly what characteristics in the primary teaching labour market, can assist, or impede, the achievement of women teachers' promotion strategies?

## EXTERNAL CONDITIONS AND PROMOTION STRUCTURES

### External Conditions

The different career contexts provided by the contrasting external conditions of expansion in the 1960s and 1970s, and contraction in the 1980s, have already been explored. In respect of promotion opportunities for women primary and infant teachers, the effects of expansion are controversial. It has been suggested that expansion of teaching alone did

not improve promotion opportunities particularly for primary teachers and for women (see Chapter two). In fact when the number of teachers was increased in the 1970s, women primary teachers proportionate chances of being in a headship post were at their lowest (only 6.6% of all women primary teachers were heads in 1975). It is necessary therefore to clarify what career opportunities mean and how they are to be indicated in times of expansion and also in times of contraction. In terms of the proportion of women primary teachers who were in a primary headship post, expansion, economic prosperity and political optimism did not necessarily mean increased promotion opportunities for women primary teachers.

### Promotion Structures

In addition to the wider economic and political conditions of expansion and optimism or contraction and pessimism, there are also the promotion structures themselves, perhaps peculiar to each particular occupation and profession, that can influence and affect the career opportunities for practitioners. In primary teaching there are three features of the promotion structure that have consequences for both men and women teachers. These are firstly a compressed promotion structure with relatively few layers or levels; secondly, there is more variety, variation and flexibility in the career routes that individual teachers take to achieve a headship post; and thirdly, there is less need for geographical mobility between educational areas and different parts of the country in order to achieve promotion in the primary teaching career.

Compared with secondary teaching, primary teaching has fewer stages or levels in the promotion structure, as has already been explained (see chapter two and Table 1.2 in chapter one). With the old system of scaled



posts, for the majority of primary teachers there were only two promotion stages (a scale two and a deputy head position) in the career route to a headship. For a minority of teachers, if schools were large enough, there were scale three posts in addition. Purvis (1973) claimed that one consequence of a relatively flat career structure was that career patterns tended to be horizontal rather than vertical and that teachers moved for increased job satisfaction rather than for a higher grade post. Since Purvis made this claim the career structure for secondary teachers was made much more hierarchical while the career structure for primary teachers remained relatively flat. A further consequence of the truncation of the promotion hierarchy for primary teachers, particularly as there is only one deputy and one head position for each primary school, was that the large majority of women primary teachers remained at scale two positions. A scale two position or the now equivalent basic scale position represents a career peak for many primary teachers. The return to a basic salary scale with incentive allowances is likely to reinforce horizontal rather than vertical career patterns within primary teaching, particularly for women teachers.

A second characteristic of the primary teaching promotion structure which has implications for the careers of men and women teachers is that in primary teaching there has been less formalization of the career route to a headship post (see chapters two and three). It was possible, if circumstances at a particular school were auspicious, for a teacher to be promoted from a scale one post to a deputy position or from scale two to a headship (after an acting trial period). However, there might well be a gender difference in respect of the formalization of the career route. Women's careers have shown more variety and variation in their routes to a headship post in the past probably because of their family commitments.

but men might have progressed more formerly achieving promotion in regular and successive stages. Gender differences in the achievement of headship posts might increase further, therefore, as a result of increased formalization of career routes.

The third feature of the promotion structure of significance to the careers of teachers is the need for stability within a local education authority in order to achieve promotion. Whereas most professions and occupations require practitioners to be mobile between areas and districts in order to acquire wider experience, in primary teaching such mobility is not an essential requirement. Amongst the headteachers in the career history study, a common factor in their careers was geographical stability. Most had achieved their promotions within the one education authority. Some heads, as teachers, had worked in different parts of the country early in their careers, but their promotions were mostly achieved within schools in Penns County and after they had been able to acquire a degree of stability with the one employing authority. It seemed, therefore, that at least for these women, stability within a local education authority and mobility only between a small number of schools were important in their career development. The ability to be geographically mobile in order to achieve promotion in the career up to the headteacher position, is not necessarily important for women primary teachers.

## LABOUR MARKET CHARACTERISTICS AND PROCESSES

### Gatekeepers to Promotion

A factor of significance in the careers of primary teachers, both men

and women, is the influence of 'gate-keepers' and the sponsorship of individuals for promotion posts. Lyons (1981) examined the "gate-keeping devices used to hold some teachers at their present levels and to promote others to more senior positions" (p. 64) and "gate-keepers who regulate and control teacher progression between career stages" (p. 134). The influence of gate-keepers on teachers careers in a comprehensive school has been analysed by Sikes (1984). For primary teachers, the most important gate-keepers to promotion posts are inspectors/advisers (Winkley, 1985) and headteachers, since it was headteachers who applied for scale promotions, and who now will apply for incentive allowances, for individual teachers.

The headteachers in the career history research commented on the advice and encouragement of inspectors/advisers and of their own headteachers in motivating them to seek promotion. Headteachers had given the initial push and had guided teachers into appropriate courses of action. Thus, the idea of going for promotion was put into Mrs Tanner's mind by her headteacher at the time:

I hadn't been back long when the head said to me "Are you going to stop here or are you going to think of promotion?" It wasn't until she said that that it ever entered my head.

Mrs Collins explained how, following her return to teaching, she needed a push on to the promotions ladder:

My career wasn't really planned. I didn't want to be

a head. I hadn't really thought about being a deputy.

I think people said, you know inspectors came around and said "You've been here long enough. What about applying for some promotion? Come on". I needed that before I did it.

Similarly, Mrs Butler had needed an initial push and then constant reassurance and confirmation as she progressed up the career ladder:

When the graded post came up, the head said I ought to be applying for it and I thought why not? I will have a go. I needed that encouragement to apply for promotion. Probably I have been very fortunate with people I have worked with who have given me backing and supported and encouraged me. When I was deputy head, the head I was working with, she continually boosted my confidence. She told you if she thought you stood a chance or not. She said yes I ought to apply for a headship. So I did and I got it.

Mrs Ellis had sought the endorsement and confirmation of the inspectorate for her decision to move from junior to infant education. Mrs Firth had been advised by the inspectorate to apply for promotion in a junior school as a way of moving out of secondary education. Mrs Spencer had the backing and support of her head and the inspector when she applied for her deputy headship as a scale one teacher. In Mrs Grant's



case the encouragement of others was even more significant. Mrs Grant was convinced that she had been made career conscious and promotion ambitious early on in her teaching. She perceived that she had been pushed by heads and inspectors. She thought that her teaching skills and abilities had been noted, and praise and encouragement had been given. She claimed she was continually urged to seek promotion; advice was given and appropriate routes of movement were recommended:

I went to work at an infants school in the city. I did one term in that school and the headteacher said I ought to go for promotion. And I got promotion. I got a post of special responsibility in another infants school (in the same area) ... I stayed at that school for two years and two terms. The head urged me to apply for promotion; wanted me to become her deputy head. I wouldn't because I didn't entirely agree with her philosophy. I applied outside that school. I was being pushed by educationalists, all the way along the line really, to go on. Not absolutely sure myself that I could do the job. Flattered, of course. But it was at a pace. I didn't have time to sit back and think what am I doing?

(Two years, two terms later, I became a deputy head at an infants school in another city area). I was now a career teacher ... I enjoyed being a deputy head. I was creative in my teaching ... Then I found that the inspector had been alerted by the head to what was going on in my room. Then the next thing I

knew, they'd invited every teacher in the city in groups, over a period of time, to come to my classroom, for a course in my classroom ... I suddenly found I had made a name for myself in the city.

Everybody knew who I was, which I hadn't chosen. But I was singled out. Then the inspector told an HMI who came to visit me. Next thing I knew I'm invited to help on a course at ... University one summer and talk to headteachers and HMI's. Which I did. I think I was head-designate then. I got my headship in that September in a city infants school (age 29).

There were clear elements of sponsorship in Mrs Grant's career. In considering her career, Mrs Grant clearly perceived the encouragement of heads and the sponsorship of inspectors to have been important in motivating her and in guiding her along a career route. Later in her career, when she was an infant head, an inspector had advised her to wait before applying for a primary headship. Her own infant school and the junior school on the same site were destined for amalgamation:

Actually an inspector had given me a first indication that something was up when I told the inspector I was thinking of applying for primary headships. The inspector must have known that all this (amalgamation) was on the cards and obviously had me ear-marked for the job. I see now. The inspector told me to hold my horses for a little while "You've not been here that

long dear".

A year later a new primary school was formed out of the old junior and infants schools. The head of the junior school took early retirement and Mrs Grant was appointed head of the primary school without an interview.

Of course, not all the women heads attributed their promotion successes in primary teaching to the encouragement or sponsorship of gate-keepers. Some of the heads were clearly self-motivated, career-dedicated and achieved their promotions in regular and successive stages (see Mrs. Williams in chapter four). But clearly, the promotions system can be seen to be open to abuse. Many teachers are not sponsored and this is, perhaps, the major reason why the promotion system is criticized as unfair (Lyons, 1981; Sikes, 1984). In addition, heads and inspectors are more likely to encourage those teachers whose pedagogy and aims seem to fit with their own and teachers who are desirous of promotion could have to bear this in mind and adjust their approaches accordingly. This could result in a uniformity, a sameness of approach among those in high positions in primary education and consequently a 'cooling-out' of those who do not fit and who, therefore, are not encouraged. Obviously such methods of encouragement and sponsorship in promotion are not unique to teaching. Also, there might be more room for sponsorship in secondary education where there are more posts of special responsibility to be allocated. Teachers unions have made certain recommendations as to how abuses in the promotions procedures might be avoided (NAS, 1979; NUT, 1981; 1984; 1985). But the different encouragement and sponsorship by gate-keepers of men and women primary teachers could also account for some

of the discrepancies in the numbers of men and women in senior posts in primary teaching.

## **WOMEN TEACHERS STRATEGIES**

The variety and variation in the stage and timing of the beginnings of the search for promotion in the teaching career is large. Some of the main differences amongst women teachers can be illustrated using material from the career history accounts of the women primary headteachers.

### **Promotion and Family**

For women more than for men, the decision to marry and even more important, the decision to have children, have very significant career implications. One career strategy, therefore, is to remain single in order to devote oneself totally to career and to achieving promotion in teaching. This is a strategy of declining significance. It was more important between the two World Wars in the period when a marriage bar could mean the end of teaching work for women and when the spinster schoolteacher was a common figure (Oram, 1983; 1987). But now, the decision to marry has less direct and obvious but nevertheless significant career implications for women. Because prevailing beliefs continue to uphold the importance of the mans job rather than the womans, this means that the man's career has priority in the occupational negotiations of working couples. Clearly the differences in the resolution of career conflicts among couples are enormous and the variety of resolutions is increasing. But, in general, the mans career takes priority in the early years of a marriage and the woman can achieve promotion only if this does



not entail a disruption in the husband's working life.

Of even more significance to the careers of individual women teachers is the decision to have children. In most female occupations motherhood still means a break in paid service (Joseph, 1983) and an interruption in promotion development usually at a time when male colleagues are making significant advances in their own careers. The decision not to have children or at least to postpone having children, is a significant career decision for women and one which might be on the increase in some occupations. Difficulties in credibility remain, however. Rothwell (1985) claimed that women managers choosing to forego parenthood in pursuit of careers continued to experience suspicion that they might change their minds.

Of the primary headteachers in the career history study, Mrs Williams had made a positive decision to have no children. For Mrs Williams, career was more important than family (see chapter four). But for most women this is a difficult decision to make and it is particularly difficult for women involved in teaching and caring for the young children of others. Social pressures on women to be mothers, the idealization of motherhood and family life, and the association of motherhood with femininity, all mean that childfree women are either pitied for their barrenness or criticized for their career ambition and neglect of personal obligations. More often, therefore, the woman primary teacher who is childfree, is so for other reasons. Of the childfree headteachers in the career history sample, Mrs Gilbert had put off having her own children because of her husband's career and until she had reached a certain stage in her own career (see chapter four). It was not so much that she had clear ambitions from the beginning. It was rather that she got caught up in the promotions race; having achieved one career goal, she

set her sights on the next. In order to achieve her career goals, she had postponed her plans to have a family. But the family plans had not been abandoned.

Alternatively for those who could not have the children they wanted, career became in some ways a substitute, a compensation. Mrs Curtis had had no children but this was not through choice. She had married late and they had not been able to have the child they would have wished. Indeed, Mrs Curtis explained her career success as, in some way, a compensation for her late marriage and lack of children:

If anybody had asked me in my early twenties, what my ambitions were, it would have been to have a home and family and that would be it. I saw teaching at the beginning as just a stop gap and I suppose most women did at that time.

I suppose people would see me as a career person but it's all been a bit knocked-into-it for one reason or another. I don't think, deep down, that I ever regarded myself as a career person and probably even now I would say that I'm not particularly ... But I think other people would perceive me as being very ambitious.

So, decisions or outcomes that result in the having or not having of children can form an important part of a woman teacher's career strategy. But the personal responsibilities of wider family, of partnerships and households as well as of motherhood can further influence the strategies

of those women teachers who decide to seek promotion. It seems worthy of note that the careers of women teachers frequently lack a clearly defined end goal or purpose. From careers research (Hilsum and Start, 1974; Lyons, 1981) it seems that many men teachers have developed and followed a career route to, say, a headship position, moving posts, schools and even areas in order to acquire necessary experience and achieve promotion steps and stages. Some women teachers will also do this but more often women teachers will have proceeded one step at a time (Grant, 1987; 1989). They see that they can cope with a teaching post and with their family and personal responsibilities. Then they begin to recognize the limitations of a new post in terms of what can and cannot be done. And then, and only then, do they begin to look around and contemplate taking the next step. There might be significant gender differences, therefore, in the attitudes of men and women primary teachers to career planning and development.

For most married women, their personal responsibilities are of fundamental importance. They take the next step only if their partners can cope and in particular if their children will not be badly affected by any change. They feel that they can be the best judges of this. They would know if their personal lives were being adversely affected and, if they do feel this, then some are prepared to reverse the career step. In the career history research, Mrs Butler explained how cautious she was in her return to teaching and how she had reassured herself that such a step could be retraced if the family, in particular the children, could not cope:

I went on the understanding that I would do a term and  
I would see how it went. I had a chat with (the  
inspector) and we agreed that was how it would be. I

would agree to the term and if there should be any hiccups then, obviously, I would finish. I would have to finish and she seemed quite agreeable to that. In fact, things worked out extremely well.

Mrs Howard's career was also a good illustration of how career decisions were made and executed one step at a time. When her boys had started school and were occupied during the day, Mrs Howard did an advanced Diploma in Education and then became a scale three community teacher. But she quickly became aware of the limitations of that position:

(As a community teacher) there were frustrations of course because I was subject to the wishes of the headteacher. So there were limits to what I could do. I knew I would never have total control over the way school work was developed unless I acquired some authority within the school and one needed to do that by going through the stages. So when a deputy headship came up in a school where I knew the headteacher felt as I did, I applied for it and got it.

But family responsibilities remained of fundamental importance. Not until she was relieved, to an extent, of the responsibility for small children, could she contemplate taking on greater career responsibilities:



The family came first. We needed the money. I was fortunate in that I was trained to do a job that I loved and it was compatible with having children. I didn't really get the fever about promotion or going anywhere until I had the freedom to do the job that I wanted to do as a community teacher and realized how many ideas I was getting from it about how schools ought to be. That was when I thought I could do it and I'll go forward.

Women primary teachers who are looking for promotion are likely to proceed more cautiously therefore than some of their male colleagues. Also, it seems that women might prepare themselves and are reconciled to failure more often than men. The heads in the career history research had been prepared for rejection when they first applied for promotion posts. They would not have minded too much if their applications had been unsuccessful. After all, they had the best of both worlds: they had interesting and absorbing work and they had their personal lives. So if the promotion had not come, then they would not have felt too badly about it. It has been suggested that women do not put themselves forward for promotion (Hilsum and Start, 1974) and that this is the main explanation of the small numbers of women in promotion posts. But if this is the case then the explanation should not end there; it is necessary to understand the reasons for women's reluctance to pursue promotion progress. Women's caution in their career steps and ready acceptance of alternatives to promotion achievement as sources of satisfaction and self-esteem might

form part of such an explanation.

### The Beginnings of Promotion Ambition

Given the influence of gate-keepers in the primary teaching labour market and the dual responsibilities of personal as well as teaching roles in women's career strategies, at what times in their teaching careers and stages in their personal life cycles do women begin to develop promotion intentions that might eventually lead to headship posts? The career history data can be used to illustrate the main differences. Mrs Williams is representative of those teachers who developed promotion intentions early and subsequently proceeded step by step up a formalized career ladder to a headship post (see chapter four). She described her career development in the following way:

I taught there from January to July, whereupon we moved to Pennington. I went to a primary school where I taught infants. I was there three years. After one year I got a scale two, then I got a scale three. Then I got a deputy headship at a school in the city. I was there for five years. Then I came here as head six years ago (age 31).

Other heads had also developed their promotion intentions early, sometimes because of and sometimes causing a subsequent marriage crisis or breakdown. Some, like Mrs Gilbert, had pursued promotion in their careers after or alongside their husbands' developing careers, and Mrs Gilbert was

now hoping to have a family. But the most common strategy, particularly among the women heads who had had children of their own, was to delay promotion in the career, usually until their own children were occupied at school and their husbands were settled in their work. For the women who had taken time out of teaching to care for their own young families, they did not begin to consider developments in their careers until they had returned to teaching and their children were settled in school. Mrs Howard explained how, when both of her boys were at school full-time and were occupied during the day, she began to take more positive steps to further her own career:

I thought this was the time to do some further study.

I'd learnt quite a lot from these two thundering little lads around and there were a lot of questions I wanted answers to. So I did a diploma, a Diploma in Education; not on secondment, I got a place that didn't cost me anything. I just wasn't earning for that year. That really was the turning point as far as the career goes because I enjoyed it far more than my teacher training. I found it extremely exciting. Everything seemed so much more relevant the second time round because I knew now exactly what they were talking about.

She had returned to teaching initially on a part-time supply basis before her second son had started school. But promotion in her career had to wait until both her boys were settled and were occupied during the day:

When I started teaching again after the children, I didn't think in career terms. I'd only thought at that stage of earning money in a way that I enjoyed. I don't think it was until the community teacher job that I thought about making ... I had no ambitions until then to go any further. The family came first.

Other heads had confirmed this timing. Mrs Tanner and Mrs Collins had not thought about promotion until they had returned to teaching, until their children were settled in school and content, and until they had reassured themselves that they were coping with home and with teaching responsibilities. Only then did they begin to think that they might try for promotion. Mrs Butler explained the beginnings of ambition for her in the following way:

When I got back into teaching, I wasn't at all ambitious then. I was just happy to be a scale one and cope with the family. Then, when I'd returned, I found that, well, I could cope, if you like. I don't know, I suppose I felt more and more competent as the weeks went by and it wasn't as difficult as I had imagined.

Mrs Edwards became promotion ambitious "almost as soon as I went back to teaching really". But family responsibilities continued to play an



important part in the timing and organization of these women's careers. Mrs Ellis made an important career decision (to move from junior to infant education) while she was looking after her own young children at home. The decision was made partly for promotion reasons: she thought promotion would be more easily achieved in an infants school; and partly for family reasons: her childcare and teaching responsibilities could more easily be reconciled:

I didn't want any responsibility initially. I wasn't seeking promotion. I had no vision of being a headteacher until I was at home with the children. Then when I went back into teaching, I moved to infant teaching as something which would enable me to get on. I could fit into the scheme of things and I also saw a future in infant education where I could get on fairly rapidly. So I suppose I was an opportunist in that respect. I also saw that the children could fit in. I went back to a school where there was a nursery they could go to. It worked very well because they had access to me if they needed me and vice versa. It was as ideal to me as it could be.

Mrs Spencer did not begin to think of promotion until she had returned to teaching and even then it was through the intervention of chance or luck factors that she became promotion conscious. She explained how, when she returned to teaching at an infants school in the city, during her first year several of the staff left, including the head and

the deputy:

So I applied for the deputy headship. At the interview I did explain that it seemed a little cocky to apply for a deputy headship when I didn't even have a scaled post. But I explained the situation to the interviewing panel and they obviously decided that it was best ... You see I wasn't young. I was a mature teacher and I'd had a lot of experience. I hadn't been at that school for very long, only two terms, but I was already virtually doing the job of being deputy head by supporting the (new) head. They obviously decided that in that particular situation, it was best to appoint me to give stability to the staff so that I could help the new young teachers. So I missed a rung up the ladder somewhere, but it was just being in the right place at the right time, I suppose.

I didn't seek promotion, not until the circumstances at that school led me to think I would be the best person for the job in that situation. Then once I was a deputy head, I thought I could apply for and get a headship.

Mrs Firth was unusual in the group of headteachers in that she had achieved the post of deputy head before taking time off to care for her own children. However, she denied that she was promotion ambitious before she had her children. She explained that she achieved her first promotion

as a result of her desire to move from a secondary to a junior school:

At that time (1956) it was difficult to get out of the secondary sector because the bulge of the post-war years was just entering. The inspector told me that the only way to get back into a junior school was by applying for promotion in a junior school. Now, at that time, women teachers were not paid the same as men teachers so that promotion was easier for a woman up to the deputy head level. It may have been at the head level, but I don't know. Very few women applied. So I applied for what was then called a principal assistant in a junior school. There were only two applicants and I was one of them and I got the job. I stayed there for about four years (1956-1960) during which time two things happened. We got equal pay (brought in) over a period of five years, I believe; and they changed the title of the job from principal assistant to deputy head.

The first time she was promoted, Mrs Firth claimed that she had been made promotion conscious almost by accident in her change from a secondary to a junior school. But after her return to teaching, because she had to return to a scale one post, she was motivated to achieve her former status. She achieved deputy head status the second time around and then, five years after she returned full-time, she became a head. So inspite of her career achievements before she had her children, Mrs Firth denied that

she was promotion ambitious at that stage. She felt she was made promotion conscious almost by accident in her move from a secondary to a junior school and as a result of her 'demotion' on her return to full-time teaching.

Not all the married women heads in the career history study had taken time off teaching in order to care for their own young children. Mrs Whetherby had been a late entrant to teaching; she had trained, become a teacher and achieved promotion after her two children had started school. Mrs Grant had continued to train and then to teach while her daughter was very young. This was not a positive decision on her part; she felt that she had to because of the difficult circumstances she and her husband were in at the time. Similarly, Mrs Porter felt that she had had no choice about continuing in teaching. She had worked out of financial necessity because her husband had left her. Her children were six months and eighteen months old when she returned. These last two women had made their careers and been successful in achieving promotion possibly even because of their difficult family circumstances.

#### PROMOTION STRUCTURES AND STRATEGIES: GENDER DIFFERENCES

There are differences then between women primary teachers in the stages in their teaching careers and the points in their personal life cycles at which they begin to seek promotion. Often such differences are explained by early or late perceptions of promotion ambitions which are then interlinked with women's personal situations and circumstances. But given the extent of such variations between women themselves, are there any essential differences that might be suggested between women and men primary teachers in the construction of career strategies which can



successfully negotiate career structures and are able to reconcile conflicting claims and demands?

External conditions of expansion or contraction seem of limited significance for the promotion chances of both men and women primary teachers. If percentages of teachers in headteacher posts is taken as an index of promotion chances, then expansion seems to reduce the promotion chances for both men and women but for women more than for men teachers; whereas contraction increases the promotion chances of both but for men more than for women teachers. Recent changes to the promotion structure and the standardization of the career route to a headship post are likely to benefit men more than women since women teachers have shown more variety and variation in their routes to a headship position. Similarly, if length of experience and the ability to be geographically mobile become more important qualifications for a headteacher position, then this will limit the promotion chances of women teachers more than men. The sponsorship processes in the primary teaching labour market have generally benefitted men teachers more than women. But a greater awareness of these processes, together with more women in management positions in some schools, might mean that sponsorship could begin to work in some women's favour.

The continuing importance of personal and domestic responsibilities will affect and influence the construction of women's career strategies and women's promotion intentions probably more than their male colleagues. An I.L.E.A. investigation (1984) into the attitudes to promotion of secondary teachers found that men were more likely to apply for promotion than women. But that while men who had a partner and children were more likely to apply for promotion than single and childless men, for women the position was reversed. Single, childless women were most likely to apply

for promotion, women with a partner and children were least likely. Such gender differences in attitudes to promotion are likely to be found also amongst primary teachers. Some women teachers, particularly the single and the childfree, will start promotion development early and will work progressively towards a long-term career goal. But for many women, promotion intentions will not clarify until later in the life cycle, until personal goals have been achieved and women can begin to devote more time to developing their own careers. Also for many women, their teaching careers will unfold one step at a time. Promotion plans will be short- not long-term and will have to be negotiated and reconciled with personal responsibilities. The significance of the personal dimension continues to represent a critical difference between the promotion intentions of women and men in primary teaching.

In this chapter an extended career history account is presented. This career history will be used to illustrate the different kinds of influences on women's careers in primary teaching that have been identified in previous chapters. Mrs. Addison's account is not a special case but it is representative. The factors she identifies also occur in other career histories. Mrs. Addison has no children and this makes her family circumstances different in some respects from other married women headteachers. But Mrs. Addison is a single parent. Her account illustrates the complexities and difficulties of career building for women. Her narrative confirms the importance of the impact of personal attitudes, actions and responses and the complexity of social experience. It reminds us of the dangers of overgeneralization and generalization. But her account also gives us information. She tells us about her strategies for coping with career contingencies. She tells us how she managed the systems and structures. She describes the ways which women are

Chapter 8

UNDERSTANDING WOMEN'S CAREERS

This book has argued that women's own accounts of their careers in primary and infant teaching and their interpretations and understandings of their experiences can be important sources of data in analyses of women and career. Women's own accounts have to be situated in the wider contexts, of changes in external conditions and of changing labour market mechanisms and processes. But women's accounts can give preliminary interpretations of how they considered such contexts affected their careers. Then their interpretations of contexts can be viewed in the light of other sorts of data which may or may not confirm their understandings.

In this chapter an extended career history extract is presented. This career history will be used to illustrate the different kinds of influences on women's careers in primary teaching that have been identified in previous chapters. Mrs. Addison's account is not a special case but it is representative. The factors she identifies also occur in other career histories. Mrs. Addison has no children and this makes her family circumstances different in some respects from other married women headteachers. But Mrs. Addison is a critical case. Her account illustrates the complexities and difficulties of career building for women. Her narrative confirms the importance of the detail of individual attitudes, actions and responses and the complexity of actual experience. It reminds us of the dangers of oversimplification and generalization. But her account also gives us information. She tells us about her strategies for coping with career contingencies. She tells us how she managed the systems and structures, the contexts within which careers are

constructed. From her account we can learn about strategies and contexts in careers in primary teaching. Mrs. Addison's account is presented and then discussed. Her story, graphically and sometimes movingly told, illustrates some of the difficulties that are negotiated and managed by women developing careers in primary teaching as well as some of the dilemmas and contradictions that remain unresolvable.

Mrs Addison (Head of Infants School - age 55;  
widowed and remarried; no children)

I went to training college for two years from 1949 to 1951 and I was trained to teach infants. My first job was in an infants school in Merton and I stayed there three years until I got married. Then I moved to Pennington due to marriage, simply due to marriage, not anything else and I did two years with juniors since that's where they wanted me to go. Then we moved house and I didn't particularly like that headteacher so I made (the house move) the excuse and I went into one of the inner city infants schools and I spent three years there.

Then the head I worked for there got the headship of a brand new infants school and she said to me that she was allowed to take one member of staff with her. She would take me with a view to my becoming her deputy head. The authority had already said to me, and various people, that they thought I should be thinking



in terms of promotion, you see. But just as I was going to do that, my husband moved to Norchester. My husband had decided that he couldn't work where he was and we were off to Norchester.

I had three months house hunting and housework and couldn't stand it. I couldn't stand being at home so I went back to work. Luckily one of the advisers from Pennington was by then an HMI in that part of the world and she told me to let her know as soon as I wanted to work. So I let her know and I went into an infants school on the outskirts of Norchester where I stayed for five years. At that time there were no such things as scaled posts or graded posts. You were either a deputy head or a head and that was it. The HMI used to come in and say "When are you going to apply for promotion?" And I said "Well, I must prove to this authority and everybody else what you know, what I can do, because I'm an unknown entity". So just as I was going to apply for promotion again, my husband said he could no longer work at that place and we were going off down to Gretton.

I had been asked to apply for small headships, not waste time applying for deputy headships. The HMI and the Inspectors would visit my classroom and say "Look here, have you thought? You must really be making some move". And I did in fact apply for a small headship. I didn't get it but I did get an interview on my very first application. I was only young, about

twenty-eight, but I did get an interview.

Anyway we moved to Gretton. They told me that they didn't need teachers at all. They could take their pick of teachers from all over the country; they had filled all their schools. I went to Fenton City and I went to Gretton County and I was told no. I should have come earlier. I left my name and references and things and apparently they took up references with my previous head. About a fortnight later, someone from the county came and knocked on the door and by then I'd also had a 'phone call from Fenton City and I'd got a job. I wasn't without work at all. I was fixed up by the time school started. They asked me to do juniors again so I went into juniors.

I stayed at that school for three years and after two years the headmaster offered me a scale two for all sorts of things. I did drama and art, oh all sorts of things; looked after the girls and did anything he wanted me to do. After two years I had said "Well I must start looking for promotion and I can't fiddle about". So he gave me a scale two and thought that would hold me. But it didn't. I did a further year. Then I applied for a deputy headship, in a very large infants school and I got it; one year after my scale two. Two years after, I applied for a headship and got that. I worked as a head in Gretton for one year.

After one term my husband came and dropped the bombshell that he'd received a letter that day. That

the factory was bought out and the company that bought them out had all their own laboratories and everything in the north. (They) just closed one half of the factory and made all that workforce redundant. So the main thing was to get him a job and he was not to take the first thing that came because financially I could keep us going. So he must take what made him happy. He did have a choice of jobs; he had quite a good choice and within two months he got a good job at no drop in salary or anything else and he moved back up here. I had to stay in Gretton for two terms in order to sell the house and also take my school through a very difficult time. The headteacher who'd been in there had had a nervous breakdown on the premises and had been carted off in an ambulance. The staff were all on tranquillizers and I had been put there to specifically do a job and could not leave it under a year. By the time I left at the end of a year the staff were happy; the parents were all allowed in the school. They were not happy I was going; they were very tearful. But at least they were looking outwards and I could hand it over to somebody as a happy place which it wasn't when I took it. So I then had to get a headship. I had to look at a map; put a compass in and draw a ring around my husband's workplace. I knew it was feasible for both of us to travel X number of miles. I looked at a newspaper and I saw three headships: one in Merton, one in Mertonshire and one in Penns County at a new school

opening, a new open-plan school not yet built. I sent in application forms for all three and I got an interview for all three.

The one in Merton which I wanted was a multi-racial school in a very bad area of Merton. But I've always worked with children in difficult circumstances, usually in very poor areas and I always ended up with all the difficult children: children that were mentally retarded or children who were disturbed, I always had them in my class. So that was the school I wanted. They would offer it to me providing I would ask for early release from Gretton which I wouldn't do. I said "I won't do it because they've been so good to me. They are very upset I'm going, but they are doing everything they can to help me to move. I won't leave that school until the year is up so you'd have to wait for me and I won't ask for early release". So they didn't offer me the job.

So I went back to Gretton and came up again and had the interview (for the Mertonshire school) the day before the interview for my school here. As soon as I got to the Mertonshire school I thought "Oh my god, I can't work in this school, I couldn't possibly". But I'll have to go through with this interview because I must make the transition. Because I must set up home here with my husband. My husband was living with my father and step-mother and I had to move the household up, the cats and you know I couldn't leave him. So I



had to get a headship quickly and it all had to dovetail. I thought now if they offer me this I don't know what I'm going to do. They said had I any more interviews in the pipeline and I said "Yes, tomorrow, I've one at county hall in Pennington". They said "if we offer you this job, what will you do about that interview tomorrow? Will you turn it down?" And I said "Probably not", because I cannot lie. Then they said "Are you still interested seriously in this job here?" I said yes but my face and voice always show and they must have known that I really wasn't. So I wasn't offered that one ..... I went to county hall before the full committee the next day. I arrived and was told it was already decided. One of the people called for interview said "Where have you come from?" and I said Gretton. And she said "Oh! What a long way because we know whose going to get it". "Well," I thought, "Oh dear! Fancy trailing me this distance". Anyway I got it.

It was a conscious choice not to have children because I still feel, - I don't care what anybody says, I'm old-fashioned - I could not possibly be a really good full-time head and a really good full-time mother. I would end up doing both jobs to half of my capacity. Whereas I decided that I like working and like a career.

Really I get a lot of enjoyment from the children that I'm caring for and I always tackle children who badly need caring for and communities that need caring for. So that has been better than my reproduction of two children I'm sure.

I did say that I didn't think I wanted a family and we got that cleared before we married. So we did marry knowing that within marriage we would have our own careers. I've never missed having children and I had a very close marriage.

I see myself as a career woman within the confines of marriage, which has handicapped me, which I understand has handicapped me. But then that was my choice to marry, so ... It's really very fortunate that I was able to mend (my career) so quickly, make up for those years. Had I not married or had I not felt that my husband's job was the most important - because I still think that to a man it is and you've got to go along with that, because that's the way they're made - I would probably have gone a lot further. So therefore I have had to settle for the best that I could within my choice which was marriage. But it's a fact that without that I could probably have gone further.

JE: Did your career affect your husband's career in any way?

Mrs Addison: Sometimes his employers would give digs

about him not having children and his wife who - er, in Gretton I was referred to as 'that intellectual lady' because most of the other wives there stayed at home. I was one of very very few in that set-up that worked. The rest of them all stayed at home having coffees and teas and things and I never did of course.

But apart from that I didn't let my career affect his career. Some of the time I earned more than him and that worried him, very very much. And I shouldn't have done because the job he had, he should have earned a great deal more.

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When my husband died people came to see me, one of the advisers, and he said "Oh but surely you've got a best friend?" And I said "No, he's dead. That was my best friend, my very best friend". That's a silly remark to make but then maybe it's not. It was very, very important to me. I had thought at times that marriage was a restraint. I sometimes thought now if I'd had this freedom I would have done this, that or the other. But I only realized that actually I was so happy in my career because I had a happy relationship at home. So it's obviously very important to me that the two things go together. It's only really when I'm happy at home that I can put all my energy into my job. It must be very important to me as a person I think.

I think that whatever I've said to you that still deep-down inside me I resent the fact most strongly that many people I think are less careful than I am, less caring, less intelligent, have got further than I have. I also object most strongly the fact that a woman has to be ten-times better than a man in order to get to the same place as a man. You don't have to be good, you have to be ten-times better. And whatever they say, there would have been jobs which would not have been open to me. How many women Directors of Education do you know, how many women Deputy Directors of Education; when I was going for promotion, how many women heads of junior schools? The reason I switched back to an infants school was because I was more or less told that I would not get a headship in a junior school.

I think the thing that annoyed me more than anything anywhere was the school where I was given a scale two to keep me. That was a headmaster and they needed a deputy head. I said I'll apply of course because I'm going to go for deputy headships. He said "Well I want a man". I said "Well whatever you want I shall send in my application". So they interviewed three men and me. They had to put me on the shortlist they said because of my application form, my experience



and my work record. But I knew I was not going to get that job. They had to put me on the shortlist and interview me and I'm very angry about it: I'm very cross. Whatever we say, there are careers where obviously it's easier for a woman to gain promotion and theoretically it should be very easy in teaching. But I still think that it is more difficult for a woman and becoming increasingly so as more and more schools are amalgamating.

I might have gone for a primary school if I'd started younger and if I hadn't had a group five school. After all there are not very many group sixes come up. So if a group six was going to take you to the other end of the country and you were going to have to move to London or something like that, well it's not worth it. You have to weigh up all the pros and cons.

But I do feel very strongly about it. You see I grew up never understanding that I was a girl and that it was different for a girl. My father always indicated that you were a person and it was only really when I met other men outside my own home that I realized not all men were like my father. He thought that women were as intelligent as men. It didn't matter if you were a man or a woman; your intelligence is the thing that matters. And some men are and some men aren't; some women are and some women aren't. My first husband also thought that women were equal. I'm lucky really that most of my life was spent with a man who accepts

that in my private life. But it's not so generally in life, is it?

CAREER CONFLICT If you ask people about me they'll tell you that I'm abrasive and aggressive. Men will because possibly that is what comes across. I can't bear men coming in and starting the smiling and "Oh you do look delightful today" and "You don't look a day older than last time I saw you" - which was ten years ago. I say "Don't be stupid. You do. It's ten years so you look a bit different so I'm sure I do". You know I can't do with that so because of that I am possibly aggressive. All I want is to do things in a business-like fashion. Being a woman doesn't enter into it. That annoys me in work. I'm required to put on an act, to be a woman even though that isn't important. A silly little woman who doesn't think logically and needs men running around all the time. I still feel that whatever career we are doing, and whatever lip-service is paid, the fact is that in teaching there are far, far more women than men. Yet in the top jobs there'll be a handful of women, quite out of proportion.

also important It isn't that they don't want to. It's that they have to divide themselves. They have two jobs even if they have no children. They are still providing a comfortable home with all the ordinary things that have to be done. When you have two jobs you cannot single-mindedly, selfishly, pursue a career. It doesn't mean you don't want to.

## CAREER CONTEXTS AND STRATEGIES

The external conditions of growth and expansion which operated for most of Mrs Addison's career are not specifically referred to by her. Yet despite the job moves necessitated by her husband's career, it was never difficult for her to get full-time teaching work sometimes at short notice. There were differences though between local authorities. In Norchester and in Pennington it was easy to get a permanent post; Gretton, at first, did not need teachers and she was told she had left it too late to apply. But in Mrs Addison's case overriding all the variations in teacher demand was the importance of the network of contacts between heads, advisers and teachers and the system of taking up references from one education authority to another. The implication was that Mrs Addison's reputation went with her even to other areas of the country. She was able to get teaching work in Norchester with the help of a former adviser from Pennington. In Gretton, she felt her references from Norchester were important in getting a job in a situation of low demand for teachers.

In negotiating the promotion structure, the teaching network was also important in circulating knowledge of promotion vacancies and reputations of candidates. In the early years of her career when the promotion structure for teachers was relatively undeveloped, the only promotion positions available, according to Mrs Addison, were those of deputy and of head. In this situation Mrs Addison felt that she had to wait and prove herself in each new post before applying for such a large promotion jump. In fact, graded posts were introduced in 1956 but the

small proportion of such posts available for women primary teachers meant that they were insignificant in her interpretation of her career. (Table 2.6 in chapter two shows that in 1966 in England and Wales only 6,739 women primary teachers were on graded post I, 7% of the total; whereas 71,311 women were on the basic assistants grade, 72% of the total.) Then when the promotion structure was re-organized in 1971 and scale posts were introduced, for Mrs Addison such posts could be and in her case were used by heads as incentives to retain 'good' teachers. At this stage in her career, Mrs Addison was angered at her then headmaster's preference for a male deputy and such gender discrimination in her view necessitated a job move for her promotion to deputy head. This issue, that is the influence of gender on promotion, will be taken up again later in this chapter.

In Mrs Addison's negotiation of the promotion structure, her promotion achievements were not regular, sustained or systematic. Flexibility was critical for her career. Promotion had to be postponed, delayed and then made up rapidly. She did eventually and in an idiosyncratic way move up the promotion ladder without omitting steps or stages, as other women teachers had. But her promotions were uneven, very concentrated and not adequately represented either by an average promotions time scale or career map.

Conditions and processes in the primary teaching labour market were also important for Mrs. Addison's career. Aspects of the work culture which were significant included the informality of teacher-headteacher-adviser relations and the headteachers and advisers influence in filling posts and in encouraging and even sponsoring promotion for some teachers. The occupational network of primary and infant teachers was significant in the spread of information about posts



and positions and in supporting and backing individuals seeking promotion. An additional factor in Mrs Addison's account seemed to be the caring image of employers, that is the local education authorities. Mrs Addison felt she had received sympathy and assistance when she needed to move. Such consideration would have been shown by the employers representatives, the heads and advisers, who were able to represent a caring image on behalf of the employing authorities. In return, employees like Mrs Addison developed and displayed loyalty to their schools and to the employing authority; she refused to move until such time as she felt she had got her school through a difficult period.

Other clues are given in Mrs Addison's account of the importance of certain factors in the work culture. The job interview is a significant marker or indicator. For teachers looking for promotion, 'getting an interview' is important as an indication, a justification, that one might one day succeed. To be interviewed is regarded as a consolation prize by the 'unsuccessful'; at least they were not rejected out-of-hand. Another factor of interest are the negotiations that go on in job interviews as members on interviewing panels try to establish an applicants real commitment to the job before making a decision to offer it. The occupational 'folklore' that surrounds the interview is worthy of note. Job applicants 'know' that decisions have sometimes been made before interviews take place. Finally the significance of gender in interview decisions needs further elaboration. Burgess (1988) has demonstrated how gender was made a critical variable in promotion decisions in interviews which he observed. He has claimed (p. 136) that it is necessary to examine how far maternity leave is used against women, particularly younger women teachers (Kant, 1985; Davidson, 1985); how far family commitments are used against women in promotion decisions but not against

men (Sikes et al., 1985); and how women face overt and indirect discrimination when men are controlling appointments and acting as gatekeepers (EOC, 1983). Mrs. Addison's account of her experiences demonstrates the significance of gender in her promotions. She was in competition with men for the deputy headship at her junior school and the head preferred a male. In the competition for the deputy and headship posts of infants schools, gender was also significant in that there were unlikely to be any males in line for such positions.

In the work culture of primary teaching, women's sharing of experiences and the mutual assistance in the combining of teaching and family responsibilities that were important factors in the careers of other women teachers, were not so important in Mrs Addison's account. What was important, however, was her interpretation of her teacher and headteacher role, as a carer of children. For Mrs Addison, her motherhood role was as carer for the children in her school. She then extended the focus and saw herself as a carer of the local community from which her children came. She listened to parents and their problems; she shared their family problems and their worries about redundancy and unemployment. She was active in the local community and in another part of the interview she had listed the local associations of which she was a member. Clearly for Mrs Addison the role of headteacher of an infants school was not confined to the management of the education of the children at her school.

The strategies which Mrs Addison devised to enable her to manage both a teaching and a marriage commitment involved the necessity of constantly adapting and adjusting to demands made by her husband's work. Yet within that constraint she found room for manoeuvre, was able to negotiate constraints and make use of opportunities in the labour market.

was able to achieve promotion and to define her headteacher role as she felt was important. In her first marriage, she and her husband had decided to remain childfree in order to better enable them both to develop careers so, to this extent, their practical management problems as a family unit were lessened. Nevertheless, the significance of what have been called career 'contingencies' remained, although in Mrs Addison's case, these were all part of her developing career.

For Mrs Addison promotion was deferred in order to cope with the job moves necessitated by her husband's career. Priority was given to his job satisfaction; and her earnings, job security and general ability to cope gave him a wider choice of jobs and flexibility in taking up the job opportunities that were presented. In this sense the jobs of married women can 'underwrite' (Marshall, 1984) the career risks of their husbands, particularly if the woman's job is secure and relatively well paid.

Further promotion had been rejected by Mrs Addison both for structural reasons (there were not likely to be many group six schools) and for personal reasons. She would not welcome a move to another part of the country and she was reluctant to disturb her second husband's job. Throughout her developing and constantly adapting career strategies, therefore, the importance of personal relationships and family stability was paramount. As she herself emphasized, her work commitment was heavily dependent on her satisfaction in her personal life.

#### **WOMEN AND CAREER: WIDER DIMENSIONS**

Mrs Addison's account has been used to demonstrate the importance of factors at different levels of analysis and of the interrelationships

between such factors for women's careers in primary teaching. But there are other dimensions in her account which have wider and more general implications. Two seem to be of particular importance. The first is the general issue of husband and wife relations in dual occupation or dual career families. The second concerns the wider issue of gender influences in work and on women's chances of promotion.

### Husband and Wife Relations

The importance of the personal dimension in individuals' assessments of career success and accomplishments is amply demonstrated by Mrs Addison. For her, career success alone would not have been adequate. The importance of the personal dimension, of partnerships, marriages and families, in work and career commitment is at last being recognized by researchers (Pahl, 1984; Scase and Goffee 1989). Indeed Scase and Goffee (1989) have argued that the personal was becoming more important than the work dimension for the 'reluctant' managers in their study. But because the focus of research has been on men's work and careers, researchers have asked how far men's work responsibilities 'spillover' (Evans and Bartolome 1980) into the family. When women's work is being studied, then the question becomes how far do women's family responsibilities 'spillover' into work (Rapoport and Rapoport, 1976).

When women are in jobs like teaching which have career opportunities then, if they are married, they are likely to be in dual-career families. But this is less often the case for men. Because of the predominance of women in routine white collar work (Rapoport and Sierakowski, 1982), men are more likely to be in dual occupation families where the men might be developing careers but their wives will be in jobs with no formal career



structures. The incidence of dual career as opposed to dual occupation couples has probably been exaggerated (Scase and Goffee, 1989, p.176). But where both partners are in jobs with careers, then there is a marked tendency for men's career interests to take priority over those of women (Bowler and Legge, 1982). The importance of give-and-take in career decisions might be stressed by respondents but, as in Mrs Addison's case, it is still more often the woman who gives and the man who takes. Women are often willing partners in this exchange. There is recognition, acknowledgement and acceptance that the woman's career is of secondary importance and this is seen as essential to the maintenance of family harmony. Some authors have predicted change in this respect (Young and Willmott, 1973) and others have detected changes in women's attitudes to their work (Marshall, 1984; Scase and Goffee, 1989). But change is very slow and might be confined to some women who remain childfree and single.

The priority given by couples to the man's career is explained by the man's perceived role as provider for the family, and such a perception is confirmed by trade unionists demands for 'a family wage' for male workers, and by state benefits provision for family members (Land, 1975; 1976; 1980). One consequence of this perception is that the woman's work and career is secondary because her primary role is as mother and/or homemaker. Hence, although his job is essential, her job is a luxury, to provide extras and to give her personal satisfaction and fulfilment. The pervasiveness of this belief and the ways in which it is limited in application have been demonstrated many times (Barker and Allen, 1976; Amsden, 1980; Finch and Groves, 1983; Joseph, 1983). But the dominance of the ideology of gender differences in family roles continues and is found sometimes in unexpected places. Thus, in their studies of women managers both Marshall (1984) and Goffee and Scase (1985) have discussed the

greater opportunities open to women to take career risks since their husbands can financially underwrite such risks. Much more rarely referred to are the career opportunities which men can enjoy as a result of their having wives in regular, secure and relatively well paid work (Mrs Addison) or even wives as full-time homemakers and mothers (Finch, 1993).

The effects on men's work and careers of having spouses with career commitments and aspirations is proving to be a growing area of interest to researchers (Rapoport and Rapoport, 1976; Rapoport and Rapoport (eds), 1978); Rapoport and Sierakowski, 1982; Cooper and Davidson, 1982; Nicholson and West, 1988). The necessity for dual career negotiation rather than single career commitment puts some limitations on the man's career moves. Some researchers have claimed that for increasing numbers of men, their careers were no longer pursued single-mindedly. Robertson (1985) claimed that men seemed more concerned to improve the quality of their personal lifestyles outside rather than within work. Scase and Goffee (1989) found that their male managers were adopting the view that work and career were of declining personal importance. It might be the case, then, that in some families both men and women are increasingly putting home, family and other interests before work in making career decisions. Other effects on the man's working life remain relatively unexplored. Mrs. Addison reported the jibes that her husband experienced because they had no children. It is probable that remarks and jokes about 'successful' women and childless marriages are becoming part of the work culture and intimidatory humour experienced by growing numbers of men and women (Cunnison, 1989).

## Gender and Promotion

The experiences of women seeking promotion in primary teaching can provide some illustrations of the difficulties and dilemmas experienced by women in general in achieving promotion and in developing careers. Mrs Addison's account made clear that some posts in education remained effectively unavailable to women. She acknowledged that there had been changes in that some women were achieving junior headships whereas an infant headship was the only realistic promotion post for woman at the start of her own career. But change seemed painfully slow. Ambitious women in primary teaching are still presented with a career dilemma: to remain in junior and primary schools and to increase the risk of promotion being unsuccessful or to move to infants schools in the hope of improving promotion chances. Also it still happens that within schools, heads and others on appointment panels, can have and fulfil gender preferences in promotion posts even if, to comply with legislation, such preferences now have to be couched in non-sexist terms (Burgess, 1988).

But in Mrs Addison's account, it was her day-to-day experiences of gender relations that was a constant source of irritation. She talked of having to play the feminine role; of being expected to be pleasant, accepting and even grateful; of how she was criticized and even ostracized for abrasive and aggressive behaviour that was normal practice for some of her male colleagues. She explained about the realization, that comes early or late, that you are female and that it is different for women. And she talked about her anger which had to remain contained because otherwise she risked being further condemned as a feminist, and seen to be radical and extreme. Finally she concluded with her understanding of the career dilemma for women - the conflict within the self. How it was impossible

for women to be single-minded in their careers as this would be selfish and damaging to their partners and their families. But that this did not mean that women did not want to.

So how can Mrs Addison's account and the experiences of other women in primary and infant teaching assist more generally in understanding the dilemmas that confront women seeking promotion in their careers? Women are numerically predominant in primary teaching and 47% of primary headteachers are women which could be said to be a position at the middle level of management and seniority. More generally, only a small minority of women reach senior positions in their careers in private sector occupations although a slightly larger minority of women have achieved senior positions in some caring and service occupations in the public sector (Alban-Metcalf and Nicholson, 1984). For the most part, women developing careers are successful in achieving promotion to middle-level professional, management and administrative posts only (Hakim, 1981; Crompton and Sanderson, 1986). It is increasingly acknowledged that women can perform the management and administrative tasks required by those in promotion positions as effectively as their male colleagues (Rothwell 1985). But it seems that their acceptability is questionable in that their credibility often remains low. Goffee and Scase (1985) have claimed that this is in part a function of the discrepancy that exists between their identities as women and as senior administrators and managers. Some women in Scase and Goffee's study (1989, p135) felt that to be successful they had to sacrifice many supposedly 'female' attributes such as 'sensitivity', 'consideration' and 'intuition' in order to develop more impersonal and less affective styles.

Gender is still a significant factor, then, in the achievement of promotion posts and in determining suitability for promotion (Marshall,



1984). In most occupations that have careers, promotion in the career is probably dependent on the sponsorship of more senior male colleagues (Cooper and Davidson, 1982; Burgess, 1988). Yet such senior colleagues might have different expectations of people in senior positions and of women. Scase and Goffee (1989, p. 115) have explained the dilemma in the following way: "there are strong pressures on women to conform to predominant male ideas about 'appearance' 'attraction' and 'charm' since failure to do so can lead them to be negatively assessed as 'feminists'. As such, they can be even more marginalized ... and their promotion and career prospects further undermined". The feminist teachers interviewed by Joyce (1987) all had problems in their working lives, from being treated as a joke to being openly criticised and their work undermined.

The career dilemmas are all-pervasive therefore and women are likely losers whatever they do. Those women who are concerned with their appearance, are attractive, pleasant, sensitive and considerate, risk being thought of as poor promotion material, as not being tough enough. Yet those who are 'unfeminine' and who display assertiveness, competitiveness and aggression, are likely to be condemned as 'feminists', radical and extreme and therefore again judged as unsuitable for promotion. Any attempts by women to adjust and adapt to what senior colleagues seem to want can lead to further contradictions. Those women who accept the rules of the promotion game are likely to experience personal stress as they attempt to cultivate personal identities which are acceptable to their male colleagues while those who refuse to conform and adapt are jeopardizing their promotion prospects (Scase and Goffee, 1989) as well as making difficulties in day-to-day work relations.

Such dilemmas in image, expectations and work relations are fundamental and probably unresolvable (Firestone, 1970, Kuhn and Wolpe,

1978; Farganis, 1986). Yet further problems exist. When women are excluded from male 'informal' networks of communication, they can be disadvantaged in attempts to perform as competently as their male colleagues (Rothwell, 1985) and in acquiring information which is sometimes vital about promotion posts and positions. When this happens, women can interpret this as the need for women to 'over-achieve', to be better than the men (see Mrs Addison) in order to get to the same position. Kanter (1977) has explained this need to over-achieve as arising because of the small numbers of women in senior and middle ranking positions; in other words, they are more visible and more obvious than the men. Davidson and Cooper (1983) claimed that women feel obliged to over-achieve when they acquire promotion positions in order to refute the prevailing stereotypical assumptions about women which they perceive are generally held by men.

The contradictions posed by gender influences on promotion chances are all-pervasive therefore and some at least are unresolvable whatever strategies are developed by women pursuing careers. In certain respects a career in primary teaching has offered advantages to moderately ambitious women. Primary teaching and the headteacher role have seemed to pose fewer dilemmas and contradictions for women wanting to develop careers. In primary and infant headships it has been possible for women to continue to be 'feminine' if that means 'caring', being 'people-centred' and 'sensitive' as well as being 'efficient', 'competent' and 'a good leader'.

## POSTSCRIPT: THE NEW MANAGERIALISM

But styles of management, administration and professionalism change. Those styles which are encouraged and considered effective at one time may not be so in another (Scase and Goffee, 1989). As a result, the qualities and characteristics expected to be displayed by those developing careers and desiring promotion are also subject to change. Individuals in middle-ranking promotion positions and even more so those in senior positions in the 1980s are expected to adopt work practices, goals and objectives which are quite different from those regarded as appropriate in the 1950s and 1960s (McCrone, 1989).

In the 1960s, those achieving promotion particularly in the public sector were expected to develop management styles which were people-centred; problems were discussed and decision-making was shared; control was co-operative and by agreement rather than directive. But the characteristics required of those seeking promotion into managerial positions (in both public and private organizations) in the 1980s are different. The new styles, often attributed to Thatcherite conviction rather than consensus politics (Marwick, 1982; Kavanagh, 1987), emphasize the need for competition, personal assertiveness, firm leadership and strong control (Scase and Goffee, 1989).

These changes have affected the public services such as education, social services and health as well as private industry; there have been career implications for professionals as well as for occupational workers. Both public and private sector organizations are required to become more 'cost-effective' and 'efficient'. In general this is to be achieved by 'decentralization' (Morgan, 1986) and giving more autonomy to parts and

sections by means of devolved systems of budgetary control and then confining and limiting the autonomy through increased competition, performance-related monitoring and appraisal schemes (Scase and Goffee, 1989). Individuals seeking or achieving promotion in the new-style organizations both public and private are required to constantly demonstrate their competence and effectiveness and to achieve higher levels of measurable performance.

Such changes can be detected in primary education initiated by legislation in 1987 and 1988. The career and salary structure for (all) teachers was altered in 1987. Teacher appraisal was to be compulsory and accountability was a more formal requirement particularly for those seeking promotion. The Education Reform Act of 1988 introduced the national curriculum and the assessment and testing of children at ages seven and eleven (as well as fourteen and sixteen in secondary schools). The devolution of budgetary control (local management of schools) was to be implemented in all schools with more than two hundred pupils. The promotion of increased competitiveness between schools in their recruitment of pupils was confirmed by giving more opportunities to parents to choose schools for their children. The effects of such changes on teachers' status, particularly their status as professionals, has become a significant issue (Ozga and Lawn, 1981; Burgess, 1986; Acker, 1987; Lawn and Grace, 1987). Ozga (1981) used the term teacher 'proletarianization' and Apple (1982) used the term 'deskilling' to refer to the erosion of teachers skill and autonomy in the classroom (curriculum packaging and, more recently, the national curriculum specifications); the breakdown of employer/employee relations (as in the recent periods of teacher militancy); and the increase in management control (which makes classroom teachers 'workers' while heads and deputies become 'managers'). Such



changes have rendered old debates about teaching as a profession (Leggatt, 1970) and about the effect women have on a professions status (Simpson and Simpson, 1969) less and less relevant (Acker, 1983).

Some of the consequences of such changes for primary teachers careers and for the work role and management styles of primary headteachers can be suggested. The replacement of the system of scale posts with a basic scale and incentive allowances means that careers in teaching are less predictable and automatic (Scase and Goffee would claim less bureaucratic, 1989, p10). The efficient execution of teaching work tasks, appropriate experience and even the possession of additional qualifications are no longer sufficient for obtaining promotion. Instead, incentives are offered as rewards for effort, for accountability, for extra responsibilities and for performance-related achievements. As a result, administrators hope to achieve organizational flexibility, lower operating costs and improved motivation and commitment from junior staff (Stewart, 1986).

The primary headteacher role now includes important elements of the new managerialism. Primary heads have to be measurably efficient and effective managers of their schools. Greater emphasis is placed on their use of interpersonal skills to motivate staff to achieve national curriculum objectives and pupil assessment targets (Hunt, 1986). Those heads controlling their own budgets require accountancy skills and the ability to be tough, even aggressive, in negotiations with local authorities over the interpretation of budgetary formulas. Heads have to be competitive in their recruitment of pupils and emphasize pupil achievements in their attempts to influence parents. The pressures on heads (and the resultant stresses) are increasing as heads are required to be more directive and autocratic in their styles of management (NFER,

1989).

For headteachers in primary schools who are also women, the new managerialism is likely to present new dilemmas by highlighting further the cultural contradictions that have already been identified. The new managerialism seems to give prominence to qualities such as efficiency, accountability, ambition, striving and competition. At the same time, qualities such as caring, nurturing, loyalty and co-operation are difficult to measure and hence difficult to reward. Yet these are the qualities that have made primary teaching, and promotion in primary teaching, attractive to many women.

It has sometimes been argued that gender can give women particular qualities of leadership (qualities which stress care, informality and a personal concern for the individual) which can be especially useful in promotion positions (La Rouché and Ryan, 1984; Goffee and Scase, 1985). But if some women find the qualities required by the new managerialism uncondusive, then their careers will be handicapped. Thus, as Scase and Goffee have claimed in respect of women managers (1989, p122), if women primary teachers remain committed to people-centred styles of leadership and management when those in control of resources and promotion positions are requiring more assertive and task-centred styles, then the difficulties for women seeking promotion in their careers in primary teaching will be increased.

Partington, G. (1976) *Women Teachers in the Twentieth Century*. Windsor, NFER is an historical account of women's position in teaching in England and Wales.

Guide to Further Reading

- Acker, S. (1989) (ed.) Teachers, Gender and Careers, Lewes, Falmer Press  
is a valuable collection of papers about issues of current  
concern to women teachers.
- Ball, S.J. and Goodson, I.F. (1985) (eds.) Teachers' Lives and Careers,  
Lewes, Falmer Press contains papers which provide detailed  
studies of (mainly comprehensive) teachers careers.
- Deem, R. (1978) Women and Schooling, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul has  
a discussion of women and teaching.
- Delamont, Sara (1987) (ed) The Primary School Teacher, Lewes, Falmer Press  
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- Dex, Shirley (1985) The Sexual Division of Work, Brighton, Wheatsheaf  
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- Lacey, C. (1977) The Socialization of Teachers, London, Methuen has a  
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